

THE FIVE CENT

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The Fortunes of an Acrobat.

(Continued from Wide Awake Library, No. 343.)



As the figure came within a few yards of the spot whereon he stood, he threw up his arms and fell prostrate upon the floor

CHAPTER I.

THE DOCTOR IN DANGER—ANOTHER VISIT TO THE
"WHITE EAGLE"—CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

WHILE the droschky-driver, the fortunate Nicholas, was at the police office, another of the secret agents of that department of the state was pacing the foot-path before the hotel at which Dr. Langton was staying, watching for the appearance of a waiter or porter in order to ask a few questions concerning that gentleman.

An opportunity was presently afforded simultaneously with the opening of a window above, from which Dr. Langton—the day being sultry,

as the summer days often are, even in St. Petersburg—looked out upon the varied street life of the Russian Capital.

"Andrew," said the police agent, "who is that nice-looking gentleman with the broad forehead and the curly black hair?"

"He who just alighted from a droschky?" returned Andrew. "Oh, that is the English doctor. Yes, he is a very nice man; his name is Gilbert."

This was the name by which Dr. Langton had chosen to be known while he remained in St. Petersburg.

"Oh, Gilbert, eh?" said the police agent.

"Could you get me a scrap of his writing, do you think? I feel interested in him."

"I will try," returned Andrew. "Ask for me to-night, or early to-morrow morning, and, if I have succeeded, you shall have it. But you must remember the service if you make any profit by it."

Dr. Langton had not overheard this conversation, for the men spoke in a subdued tone; but he had seen the police agent, and recollected having seen him the day before coming out of the police office, and again that morning in conversation with a man whom he knew to be a detective.

"So you have friends in the police, Andrew?" he remarked, with a smile, when the waiter next presented himself, which was after his conversation with the police agent on the steps of the hotel. "I believe that most of the waiters in St. Petersburg have secret relations with the police. Is it so?"

"I don't know, sir," replied Andrew; "I have not been here long."

"I saw who you were talking to just now," observed the doctor. "I am in communication with the police myself, concerning a very important matter, which is the object of my visit to this city. Did your friend make any inquiries concerning me?"

"He asked me if you were the famous Dr. Gilbert, of London, of whom he had heard," replied the mendacious Andrew.

"How inquisitive the Russian police are!" said the doctor, with a pleasant laugh. "He saw me enter just now, and asked who I was, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

Dr. Langton asked no more questions, and made no more remarks.

He had heard enough to warn him that the detective police were on his trail.

He rang the bell five minutes after Andrew had left the room, and desired that his bill might be sent to him.

It was brought up by the manager, who presented it with an obsequious bow.

"I am about to leave this city," said the doctor, as he drew out his *portemonnaie*, and placed on the table the amount of the bill in good Russian coin. "Have the goodness to send my trunk to the Moscow station. My bag I will take myself, as I have some business to transact before I leave, and shall require it."

"Shall I call a droschky for monsieur?" the manager asked.

"Thank you, no," replied the doctor, "I have only a little distance to go."

The manager bowed and retired, and Dr. Langton left the hotel immediately afterwards, carrying his traveling bag in his hand.

Glancing warily around, without seeing the police agent whom he had seen in conversation with the waiter, he walked quickly in the direction of the low, dirty quarter in which the "Flying Horse" was situated.

He did not go so far as that disreputable tavern, however, but turning into a dark passage, pushed open the door of a house which closed its further end, and ascended a flight of broad stone stairs.

It was a large house, and, before it was surrounded by meaner dwellings, had been the mansion of a reputable citizen.

It was now given over to neglect and decay, and harbored a score or more of persons who followed criminal courses, but did not, as a rule, herd with the lowest class of criminals.

He tapped at one of several doors on the first floor, and it was opened by Levi Manasses, dressed as when he called at the hotel.

He entered quickly and sat down, placing his hat and bag on the table.

"My friend," said he, "I am compelled to seek a burrow in this delightful warren of yours for a few days. I suppose it will be possible to make it tolerably comfortable?"

"What will not money do?" rejoined Manasses with a smile.

"Well, I will leave the arrangements with you, my dear Manasses," said Dr. Langton, giving him a Russian note from his pocket-book. "Make the best investment you can for me in furniture and bedding, and add a commission. My trunk has gone to the Moscow railway station, and you must devise a plan to get it here without leaving any clue by which it can be traced."

"I must see some of the people who frequent the 'Flying Horse' about that," said Manasses; "and it had best be done quickly."

He went out at once, and Dr. Langton, having first locked the door, made a survey of the surroundings from the dimmed window, taking care, however, not to show himself.

About an hour afterwards, two barrows, each trundled by a sturdy lad in the garb of a peasant, stood in the yard of the Moscow railway terminus.

On one was a trunk.

On the other a pile of cabbages.

One of the lads lifted the trunk from the barrow and carried it into the booking-office, returning with Dr. Langton's trunk, which he placed upon the barrow, and covered with his companion's cabbages.

Then the latter went in and brought out the trunk which had just been carried in, and placed it on the other barrow.

Both barrows were immediately trundled off, but at a short distance from the station, the lads pushed them under a dark archway, forming the entry to a small yard.

There the labels on the two trunks were changed, and then the barrows were trundled off again.

The police, who were already on the alert, traced the trunk which they supposed to be Dr. Langton's, from the railway station to a *café* near the Italian opera house.

But Dr. Langton had not been there—was unknown there—and the trunk, on being opened, was found to contain only a dozen bricks, nicely packed in straw.

Dr. Langton's trunk had, in the meantime, safely and unsuspectingly reached the dilapidated old house to which its owner had removed.

On the following day, Dr. Langton, having disguised himself with a grey wig, procured for him by Manasses, and covered his black suit with a shabby brown overcoat, ventured to leave the "warren," and proceed to the nearest carriage-stand, where he hired a droschky for a drive to the "White Eagle."

He recognized the driver as the man who had driven him the preceding day.

But no sign of recognition was shown by Nicholas.

"Oh, Dr. Langton," Lettie Lennard exclaimed, as soon as he presented himself before her, "do let me return. My friends will be suffering the greatest anxiety on my account, my engagement at the circus will be broken, and I have always fulfilled all my engagements honorably."

The girl looked anxious and miserable, and her hands were clasped imploringly.

"Never mind your engagement," said her visitor, in a kindly, conciliatory tone. "Return with me to England, and you shall see your friends before we go."

Lettie seemed to reflect upon this proposition.

In reality, she was considering the expediency of seeming to yield to the doctor's wishes, and trusting to her wits and her good fortune for the means of extrication from the awkward situation that would thus be created.

He thought that she was yielding, and attempted to take her hand.

The manner in which she withdrew it, the expression of her countenance as she did so, undeceived him.

"Don't be cruel, Miss Lennard," he said. "You tantalized me enough that night at Grove House; don't disappoint me again."

In spite of the unpleasantness of her position, Lettie could not refrain from smiling at the recollection of the adventure to which he alluded.

"Come," said he, encouraged by what he thought was a favorable symptom of the state of her mind; "let us be friends. Do not owe me a grudge on account of the past, but forget and forgive."

"You wish me to trust you," returned Lettie. "Will you trust me? Will you allow me to return to St. Petersburg—with you, if you like—without exacting any undertaking or promise from me?"

"Is not that asking a little too much?" said Dr. Langton, with a pleasant smile.

"I am not sure that I should not be granting too much," returned Lettie.

"A friend of mine," said he, "engaged a young lady to go with him to Monte Video as governess to his children, and paid her passage home. When they arrived, she thanked him for her passage, and left him. How do I know that you will not serve me in the same way?"

"You will not trust me, then?" said Lettie.

"Not without a promise and a guarantee for its fulfilment," he replied. "Come, Lettie, the promise."

He arose and advanced towards her, extending his arms as if he would embrace her, and gazing upon her with passion-fraught eyes.

"I will promise nothing," she exclaimed, shrinking from him, while her beautiful face expressed only fear and disgust.

He folded her in his arms, and, in spite of her resistance, had pressed his lips to hers, when they were both startled by the sudden opening of the door.

He released the girl on the instant, and turning quickly around, saw in the doorway a uniformed police officer, behind whom was another.

"Your business, gentlemen?" he demanded, sternly, but with his usual calmness and self-possession. "What is the meaning of this intrusion?"

"Dr. Langton," said the foremost officer, "I arrest you, in the name of the czar, on the charge of forging and uttering, and conspiring

with others to utter, spurious notes of the Imperial Bank of St. Petersburg, with intent to defraud."

"What blunder is this?" demanded the doctor, with increasing sternness; "my name is Gilbert."

"If there is any mistake, the authorities will not shrink from its responsibility," returned the officer. "In the meantime, our duty is to take you to St. Petersburg in our custody."

"Take heed what you do," said the doctor, holding up his forefinger warningly; "I am a subject of her Britannic majesty, and I will appeal to her ambassador."

"You will have the opportunity of taking any measures you may deem advisable for your defense," said the officer. "But for me the order for your arrest is imperative, and you will do well to come with us quietly."

Dr. Langton needed no argument to convince him that resistance would be as unwise as it would be futile; and though he possessed a large amount of courage, he was not a man who was likely to indulge in the reckless violence which results from the unreasoning fury of the savage.

"You will accompany me to St. Petersburg after all," he observed, turning to Lettie, with a smile.

Then he left the room between the two police officers, and Lettie, hastily equipping herself for a drive, followed them.

A second droschky now stood before the inn, and in that Dr. Langton was seated, with one of his captors by his side, and the other on the opposite side.

Lettie availed herself of the other, rejoicing at her unexpected liberation, and both vehicles were driven off at a rapid pace in the direction of St. Petersburg.

As we must now return to Willie Anderson, the reader should be informed here that the arrest of Dr. Langton was brought about by a signal given by Nicholas to a police-agent whom he passed soon after taking up his fare, and whom he very quickly recognized by his voice.

But poor Lettie had some other severe trials to undergo.

CHAPTER II.

WILLIE ANDERSON—A COMPASSIONATE RUSSIAN GIRL—THE JEALOUS DWARF—AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

FOR more than an hour Willie Anderson sat where we left him, with his face buried in his hands, overcome by the thought that his uncle had caused him to be kidnapped, with the intention of either having him murdered or immuring him for life in darkness and isolation.

But he remembered the old adage: "While there is life there is hope," and the spirit of youth is wonderfully buoyant; so he arose at last, and throwing himself on the bed, was soon fast asleep.

When he awoke, the room was less dark than it had been the night before, and on looking about him, he perceived narrow lines of light shining between boards which had been nailed across the window on the outside, as if for the purpose of concealing from the captive any indications of the locality of his place of confinement which he might have discovered by looking from the window.

He approached the window, and peered between those narrow interstices, but could see little to form any idea as to where he was.

He tried to raise the sash, with the intention of beating away the boards, but it was screwed down, and he broke his pocket-knife in a vain effort to loosen the screws.

While he was surveying his broken knife with a rueful countenance, the door opened, and a fair-haired girl of sixteen or seventeen entered bearing a tray, on which were a hot cake and a mug of tea.

"Here is your breakfast," said she, regarding him with compassionate interest, as she placed the tray on the table.

"Oh, they are not going to starve me, then?" said Willie, turning to the repast with a look of satisfaction. "I say, Mary, or whatever your name is, do you know why I have been brought here?"

"I should not be allowed to tell you, if I did," the girl replied; "but I don't know anything about it, and I daren't ask."

"Tell me where I am, then," said Willie. "Whatever you may tell me, I will not get you into any trouble. You may rely upon my word; you know I am not a Russian."

The girl smiled and shook her head as she left the room.

"Not a bad sort, I fancy," Willie thought to

himself, as he took up the hot cake, a favorite article of food with the Russian working classes; but whether he meant the girl or the cake was not clear.

The cake and tea soon disappeared, and he then made another attempt to remove the screws from the window with his broken knife, but his efforts were fruitless.

"There is nothing for it but to talk that girl over," he said to himself, and in that direction he made a further movement, when at midday she brought him a piece of cold meat, a slice of bread, and a mug of the bitter liquor which the Russians call quass, because its bitterness is derived from quassia.

"Mary," said he, lowering his voice, lest he should be overheard, "is there any way of escape from here? My friends at the circus will reward you handsomely if you will assist me to get away."

"I dare not," she replied. "And my name is not Mary—it is Fedora."

"Fedora! What a pretty name! As pretty as yourself," said Willie, who knew how far a compliment will go with most girls. "You seem a nice girl, Fedora—too nice for a place like this, which I'll be bound is a resort of thieves and cut-throats, or I should not have been brought to it. If you will help me to get away, you might go with me, if you are afraid of the consequences, and I would get you employed at the circus."

"I should like that," returned Fedora, her eyes brightening at the thought. "But I am afraid," she added, almost immediately.

"Come, Fedora, what are you chattering about there?" cried a harsh voice from the stairs.

"I am coming, Peter," she replied. "I must go now," she whispered to Willie, accompanying the words with a look that assured him of a renewal of the conversation.

Willie awaited her next visit with impatience, the suspense being rendered more intolerable by the absence of any means of passing the time other than pacing the dark room, and wondering whether he should succeed.

The darkness had become black when Fedora brought him his supper, and he was glad to see that she had brought a small lamp, which she fixed against the wall.

"Have you thought of what I said to you?" he asked her.

"Yes," she replied, "and I should be very glad to help you; but I am afraid it can't be done."

"Don't say that, Fedora," said he; "there is no such word as impossible in an Englishman's vocabulary. Think of the reward, Fedora—of the advantages of getting away from this vile place, as I am sure it is!"

"I would do it for your sake, now I know why you are here, which I have learned to-day," returned Fedora; "but I can't think of any way of getting you out. The window is fastened up, inside and outside, as you see."

"Couldn't you smuggle me down the stairs?" he asked.

"Impossible!" she replied, "Peter always waits at the bottom, and he is as strong and as fierce as a young bull."

As evidence that he was on guard, the afore-said Peter bawled at that moment.

"Come down, Fedora! Why do you stay there chattering to that boy?"

"There is only the chimney, then?" said Willie.

Fedora made a sign to him to be silent, and stepped towards the door, as heavy and clumsy footsteps came up the stairs.

At the next moment an ugly and misshapen dwarf appeared, glancing savagely and suspiciously from the girl to the captive.

"Come, you minx," he growled; "I'll give you a beating, if you linger so every time you come up here."

"Don't be jealous, Peter," said the girl, smiling; "the young gentleman will not eat me."

"He might kiss you, though," returned the dwarf, rolling his dark eyes, deep sunken in their orbits, and showing his yellow teeth. "And I won't have that, Fedora—I won't have it."

Fedora ran down the stairs, and Peter, after casting a suspicious glance around the room, closed the door and locked it.

Willie disposed of his supper, and then having extinguished the lamp, sought his couch, where he thought over all the wonderful escapes of which he had read.

When Fedora brought up his breakfast on the following morning, she drew from her bosom a chisel, such as masons use, and passed it to him, with a whispered injunction to hide it.

"I must not linger," she added, with an anxious glance towards the door; "Peter is in love with me, the ugly little animal, and he is as jealous as he is malevolent."

Then she pointed towards the ceiling and added:

"The room above is not occupied, and I will place a rope there, that you may escape by the window. Now I must go."

She disappeared on the instant, and Willie began to consider the means of escape which she had opened to him while he ate his cake and drank his tea.

He understood by her giving him the chisel, and pointing towards the ceiling, that he was to break through into the room above and descend from the window by means of a rope.

He feared to commence operations before night, however, lest they should be discovered, and his escape frustrated by the dwarf.

"Don't forget the rope, Fedora," he said, when the friendly Russian girl brought up his dinner.

"It shall be there," she returned.

"And you, Fedora, what will you do? Will you come to the circus?"

"If you get away to-night I will go there to-morrow," she replied.

"Can you ride?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied; "I learned that in the country before I came to St. Petersburg."

"I will introduce you to the manager, and ask him to let you ride in *entrees*," said Willie.

"That will be delightful!" exclaimed Fedora, her eyes glistening with pleasure.

"Come, Fedora," bawled the dwarf.

"Coming, Peter," she replied, and in another moment she was gone.

The hours had never seemed so long to Willie as they did that day.

Evening came at length, and Fedora brought up his supper and lighted his lamp, and then withdrew, but not without exchanging a significant glance with the young captive.

He discussed his supper deliberately, thinking of the night's work before him, which he feared to commence before midnight.

It would not take him long to break through the ceiling, he thought, and the rest would be easy.

The hubbub of loud talking, which, as the night wore on, was varied by shouting and singing, subsided at length, and in another half hour silence reigned throughout the house.

Then he relighted his lamp, which he had extinguished after supper, lest his supply of oil should fail before he had ceased to require it, and placed his stool upon the table.

With his chisel in one hand, he mounted the table, and then the stool, standing upon which, he was able to reach the ceiling and pick a hole in the plaster, which was then broken away.

The dust was troublesome, and besides half choking him, covered his face and his clothes.

Having removed the plaster from a space about eighteen inches square, he broke away the laths, and began to knock up the boards of the floor above.

This was the hardest part of the task, and he paused several times to wipe the perspiration from his heated forehead and listen, fearing that some of the inmates of the house might be awakened by his knocking.

All was still, however, and when he had knocked up one end of a board, it was easy to remove it by using the chisel as a lever.

Another board was removed, and then he was able, by grasping the edges of the opening, to raise himself from the stool until his shoulders were level with the floor above.

A gasping cry immediately made him aware that some person was in the room.

"Hush!" he said, in a tremulous whisper, while he hesitated to advance, and supported himself there, with half his body through the opening.

"Is it you, Fedora?"

"Who is it?" inquired the voice of some unseen person, evidently a female, subdued as much by caution as by fear.

Willie did not immediately reply, lest he should irretrievably commit himself.

He raised one knee until he could plant it on the floor, and in another moment he was in the room.

He was in darkness, for the window was small, and it was covered with a dark curtain.

The voice came from the darkest corner of the room, where he could dimly discern a bedstead, and the outlines of the upper portion of a white-robed human figure, as if sitting up, and leaning forward, and striving to penetrate the darkness and discern the mysterious intruder.

"Don't be alarmed," whispered Willie.

"Good Heaven!" gasped the woman. "Who are you? Speak!"

"Lettie!" exclaimed Willie, to whom the voice seemed familiar. "Is it possible that we are prisoners in the same house? Is it Lettie? Fedora told me that this room was unoccupied."

"I have been here only since midday yesterday," she replied. "I am Lettie, and you, if I am not mistaken, are my fellow in misfortune, Willie Anderson?"

"Yes," he rejoined. "What a strange thing! We shall now be able to escape together, Lettie, thanks to the kind-hearted Fedora. Where is the rope? Oh, here it is!"

"So you have made a friend in the house?" said Lettie, slipping from the bed on the other side, and hastily dressing herself behind the curtain.

"You have seen Fedora, I suppose?" said Willie, as he cautiously drew aside the curtains, to admit such light as was shed without by a wan moon and few twinkling stars.

"I have seen only a horrible dwarf," returned Lettie.

"Peter," said Willie. "I know him—an ugly little monstrosity, with a head as big as a peck measure, and like the ugliest mask ever seen in a pantomime."

Lettie now emerged from the screen afforded her by the curtains at the bed, and Willie proceeded to make one end of the rope fast to the bedstead.

Then he cautiously opened the window, and looked out.

Below was a yard, bounded by a wall; whether there was any means of egress without getting over the wall he could not see.

"Now, Lettie," he whispered, "will you have the rope around you, or trust to your grip?"

"Oh, let me have it around me, please," she replied.

In a few minutes he had securely fastened the free end of the rope around the girl's waist, and stood ready to lower her from the window.

Lettie passed through the window, and Willie lowered her safely to the ground, whence she anxiously watched his descent.

Grasping the rope with both hands, he followed her through the window, and began to descend hand under hand, with the dexterity acquired by practice.

Before he had reached the ground, a smothered exclamation from Lettie, and a growl from above caused him to look upward, where he saw the dwarf, gesticulating like a madman.

"Stand where you are, or I'll cut the rope!" cried the monster, and Lettie saw a knife gleam in the dim light.

Breathless with fear she leaned against the wall, while Peter hacked at the rope with his knife.

CHAPTER III.

LETTIE'S JOURNEY TO ST. PETERSBURG—THE DRUNKEN DROSCHKY-DRIVER—THE DWARF—THE ESCAPE.

WE must now go back a little in our story, in order to explain the presence of Lettie Lennard at the "Flying Horse."

We left her on the high road to St. Petersburg from the south, in the droschky in which Dr. Langton had traveled in the opposite direction just before.

For the first three or four miles of the journey the two vehicles ran side by side, their drivers seeming, by the pace at which they drove, to have made a wager as to which would reach the city first.

As they approached the suburbs their progress at the same rate was impeded by other vehicles, and especially by the carts of farmers and carriers, which lumbered along slowly.

The droschky driven by Nicholas then fell behind, and the trial of speed was abandoned.

Nicholas saw in the reward for the information which he had given concerning Dr. Langton the means of obtaining illimitable supplies of vodka, and his mouth was watering for the first draught.

He pulled up, therefore, at an inn in the suburbs, primed himself with a couple of glasses of the fiery fluid, and drove on again.

Presently he resolved upon a pipe, and his sealskin pouch requiring to be replenished with tobacco, he drew rein again, and dismounted to procure some.

"What, Nicholas!" exclaimed an ugly little man, whose height did not exceed four feet, while his shoulders were broad enough for a man of ordinary stature, and his head, hands, and feet were disproportionately large.

"Peter," said Nicholas, recognizing him as the dwarf of the "Flying Horse," "why, what brings you so far from your lair?"

"That minx, Fedora!" returned Peter, with corrugated brow and rolling eyes. "She vexes me so that I felt that I must blow off my anger by going out lest I should twist her neck."

He rolled his eyes towards Lettie, and then, as the droschky-driver entered the shop of a tobacconist, he disappeared within the door of a tavern, whence he presently emerged with a measure in his hand.

"Drink, Nicholas," said he, proffering the liquor to the droschky-driver, who had just made his purchase and was filling the bowl of his pipe with the fragrant weed. "What a pretty girl you have there! Your health, my dear. Bless the saints for vodka!" he added, smacking his lips after an impudent leer at Lettie. "And for women—vodka and women are my special weaknesses, Nicholas."

"Common failings, Peter," observed Nicholas, as he mounted to his seat.

"I'll ride with you if you have no objection," said the dwarf, clambering to his side with the agility of a gorilla, and looking not unlike one, with his dirty face framed in hair and his splay hands and feet.

He had probably been drinking vodka before he met Nicholas, for during the drive he sang, shouted, and rolled about on the seat in a manner that attracted the attention of the people whom they passed.

They were still, as it appeared to Lettie, in the suburbs when Nicholas reined his steaming horse at another tavern, within which he and the dwarf imbibed further potations of the potent spirit for which Peter had thanked the saints.

As she heard the wild shouts and bursts of laughter from within, Lettie wished herself at the end of the journey, and if she had been better acquainted with the Russian language, and the topography of the city, would have alighted and proceeded alone.

She had, indeed, half resolved upon risking the inconveniences which that course might involve, rather than expose herself to the risks attending a drive with a couple of drunken men, when Nicholas staggered from the tavern, evidently stupidly inebriated, and dragged himself to the seat, fumbling at the reins.

"Give them to me, Nick," said the dwarf, leering and winking at Lettie, as he swung himself in an ape-like fashion, after the driver; "you are too far gone, and I am as right as a rouble. The more I drink the brighter I get, while you get muddled-headed and stupid. Hi—hi!"

Shouting wildly at the horse, tossing the reins aloft, and smacking the whip until it sounded like a succession of rifle shots, the dwarf drove through the slums, scaring the children who played in the narrow streets, and running over a dog, whose death howl he hailed with a burst of demoniac laughter.

At length he stopped before the "Flying Horse," and Lettie immediately alighted, thanking Heaven that she had escaped without broken bones.

"Stay," cried Peter, as she turned to the drunken driver, who was now asleep, and offered him a couple of roubles, "have a little drop—"

He did not complete the sentence, for Lettie uttered a cry when she felt the hand of the misshapen caricature of humanity upon her shoulder—and dropping the money upon the driver's seat, would have run off.

Peter grasped her arm with the tenacity of a vise, however, pushed her into a dark passage, and then, lifting her in his arms, bore her towards a door at the end.

Lettie screamed, but at the next moment the dwarf's hand was pressed upon her mouth, the door was opened, and she found herself in a dark passage.

She struggled desperately to release herself, but the dwarf's strength seemed superhuman, and, in spite of her efforts, she was borne up two flights of stairs, and into a small, ill-furnished chamber.

With a hoarse cry, which sounded scarcely human, and seemed to express exultation at his success, Peter flung the terrified girl upon the bed, and performed a demoniac war-dance in the middle of the room.

"Help!" cried Lettie, dropping on her feet on the other side of the bed, and regarding the antics of the dwarf with fear and bewilderment.

"Peter!" a deep-toned, masculine voice called from below.

The dwarf ceased his capering, and uttered a growl, which might readily have been supposed by any one not present to have issued from the throat of some wild beast.

Then he shambled out of the room, and Lettie heard the key turned in the lock.

In vain the imprisoned girl shook the door, and demanded her liberation.

Peter had probably told some tale which was deemed sufficient explanation by the inmates of that vile den, and no one came to her relief.

The day and the night passed, and she remained unmolested, but was left without food.

Having pushed a heavy chest against the door, and contrived to tilt it on end, so that one of the lower edges fitted into a panel, and prevented the door from being opened, she had ventured to retire to rest, but was still awake when she heard the sound of Willie Anderson's chisel upon the ceiling of the room below.

Wondering what work could be in progress at that hour, she listened intently until she became aware of the raising of one of the boards of the floor.

Then she sat up in bed, and, with mingled fear and wonder, saw another board raised, and then a human head rising through the aperture.

Was it the dwarf, who had adopted that mode of ingress?

That was her first thought, but she reflected, as quickly as it flashed across her mind, that Peter would not act in that extraordinary manner without first endeavoring to force open the door, and that she was quite sure no one had attempted to do.

Then she spoke, with what result the reader has been told in the preceding chapter.

* * * * *

We must now return to the yard in the rear of the "Flying Horse," where we left Willie Anderson descending from the window by a rope, hand under hand, Lettie watching his descent in fear and trembling, and the enraged dwarf, swearing and foaming as he hacked at the rope with his knife, with the intention of precipitating the lad into the yard.

The darkness prevented Peter from seeing how near Willie was to the ground, and he uttered a demoniac cry of malignant exultation as the last strand of the rope was severed, and Lettie sprang towards her companion with a cry of alarm.

Fortunately for both Willie and the pretty companion of his escape, he was within two feet of the ground when the rope was severed, and he dropped lightly upon his feet.

Both looked immediately for some mode of escape, but the only way out was seen to be over the wall.

"Up with you, Lettie," exclaimed Willie, stooping by the wall; and in another moment Lettie had planted one foot upon his knee and the other upon his shoulder, whence she mounted to the top of the wall.

She looked to the ground on the other side, scarcely discernible in the darkness, and turned to Willie.

"Wait for me," he exclaimed, and, clutching the top of the wall with a spring, he drew himself up and stood by her side.

Then he saw that there was only an enclosed yard on the other side, and he looked quickly to the right and the left.

In the latter direction he saw a street lamp glimmering, and ran towards it along the top of the wall.

Lettie followed him, and in a few moments they stood upon a wall at right angles with the one they had traversed, and looked down upon a narrow by-street.

Willie leaped to the ground, and received his companion in his arms.

"Now we must run for it, Lettie, before that monster raises a hue and cry after us," said he.

Holding Lettie's hand in his own, he ran to the end of the street, where they paused a moment, looking perplexedly to the right and the left.

"Where are we, I wonder?" said Willie.

"There is the house we have escaped from," exclaimed Lettie, pointing to the "Flying Horse," which she recognized by the picture of Pegasus over the door. "And it was that way that the droschky came yesterday from the northward."

They turned on the instant, and ran in the opposite direction, glancing, as they ran up the streets which they passed, for indications of their neighborhood, or a policeman to direct them.

They ran until Lettie's failing breath compelled them to slacken their speed before seeing a human being, however, and, as they were now at some distance from the "Flying Horse," and in a more respectable neighborhood, they proceeded at a steadier pace.

"I know where we are now!" Willie exclaimed, when they had walked some distance further, crossing two or three canal bridges, and found themselves in a large square. "This is the Admiralty Square; and now to find our street. I know, Lettie," he added, after a moment's reflection; "come along."

Their ignorance of the topography of the city had caused them to wander considerably from the direct course to the humble quarter in which they lived, but another quarter of an hour's

walking brought them to their lodgings, where they at once sought their respective chambers, deferring the relation of their adventures to the following day.

Over their morning cakes and tea their stories were told, and, by the time the relation was concluded, they had, as they had risen later than usual, to go to the circus.

The manager was glad to see them, and being pleased with the appearance of Fedora, who arrived soon afterwards, as well as with the part she had played in Willie's liberation, which had resulted in that of Lettie's also, he at once engaged her as an equestrian supernumerary.

An exciting incident occurred during the day, which was the last of the fair.

Peter, the dwarf, having traced Fedora to the circus, went to the side entrance to demand her, and, being refused admission, ran to the front in a rage, and ran up the steps to the interior platform, whence, on his making a disturbance, he was forcibly ejected by the manager, who rolled him down the steps.

Howling with rage he ran up again, and recognizing Willie, who was performing an acrobatic feat with Devilshoof, rushed at him, and struck him on the face.

Willie replied with a stinging left-hander straight from the shoulder, and Peter measured his length upon the boards.

Springing to his feet he drew a knife, and again rushed at Willie, but Percy Bellingham so suddenly interposed the hind quarters of his horse, that the dwarf was knocked aside, lost his balance, and again rolled down the steps, at the foot of which he was picked up by a couple of stalwart policemen, and carried, kicking and swearing, to the watch-house of the quarter.

CHAPTER IV.

LANGTON IN PRISON—ALONE WITH A CORPSE—THE DOCTOR IN A COFFIN—WHAT BECAME OF THE DEAD PRISONER.

DR. LANGTON sat in his cell, in the large, gloomy-looking prison in which accused persons are confined while awaiting their trial.

His cogitations were far from agreeable, for never before had he been in so much danger of having to pass ten or fifteen years in confinement.

The evidence that had been taken on his first examination had convinced him of this, and he knew that there was nothing to look forward to but a long and tedious preliminary inquiry, extending over the whole of his life, so far as known to his prosecutors, with deportation to Siberia in the perspective.

Unless—

That was the problem that was now exercising his mind.

Unless he could effect his escape from the prison in which he was confined.

Escape, without aid, seemed impossible.

The walls were thick, the floors of masonry, the windows secured by cross bars of iron, the passages and yards perambulated by armed warders.

But there are few Russian officials who are incorruptible, and it was to the possibility of bribing his jailers that he was now looking for the means of escape.

"Why has this place been made so strong?" he asked the warder, with an air of curious interest. "Prisoners awaiting trial and hoping for acquittal are not likely to try to escape."

"Most of them have no hope of acquittal," returned the warder, with a faint smile.

"I see," responded the doctor; "and so they do try to escape, I suppose?"

"Attempts have been made," returned the warder.

"But they have not succeeded? The prison is too strong and too well watched for them to succeed, I should think."

"They have not succeeded," responded the warder. "There is no chance of escape in that way, I can assure you."

The manner in which he looked at the prisoner as he uttered the last words impressed the latter with the idea that he was accessible to bribery.

He seemed to aim at conveying the idea that escape was impossible only when attempted in the Jack Sheppard style.

"Gold is sometimes more potent than files or acids," observed Dr. Langton.

"I have been offered bribes before," returned the warder, shaking his head with reproofing gravity.

"Were you ever offered five thousand roubles?" the doctor asked, regarding him intently.

"Five thousand roubles!" said the warder, re-

fectively. "That is a large sum, doctor. One would do something for five thousand roubles, if one could be sure of getting it."

"Five thousand roubles shall be yours on the day I leave this place by your assistance," said Dr. Langton, placing his hand on the man's arm, and speaking with impressive deliberateness.

"Good Russian money?" said the warder, his eyes glistening with the tempting prospect thus opened to him.

"Undoubtedly," responded the doctor; "but in order that I may procure the money, you must convey a letter to a friend for me, which letter must not be seen by the governor."

"I will think of it," said the warder.

He left the cell, and Dr. Langton, feeling assured of his aid, proceeded to write a letter to Levi Manasses, giving him instructions as to the manner in which the money could be procured.

On the following day he gave this letter to the warder, who placed it in the pocket of his tunic, and promised that it should be secretly and safely delivered by himself that evening.

"When can it be done?" the doctor asked.

"It is impossible to fix a time," replied the warder. "I am considering the means. Hold yourself in readiness, for it may have to be done at short notice. Are you sure of the money?"

"See Manasses to-morrow," said the doctor, "but go on with your plans in confidence. The money is sure to come."

On the following day he was surprised, and far from pleased, by the introduction into his cell of an elderly prisoner, who looked very ill, and was so weak that he had to be supported.

"What is the meaning of this?" inquired Dr. Langton, in a displeased tone. "If I am to be removed to another cell, why not let me leave this before you thrust another prisoner in?"

"You mistake, doctor," returned the warder. "We are full, and are obliged to give you a companion."

"I shall complain to the magistrate."

No reply was made to this threat, and the warders, having placed the old man upon Dr. Langton's bed, withdrew.

Unable to speak of the escape in the presence of the stranger and his fellow-prisoner, and too much annoyed to speak upon any other subject, Dr. Langton paced his cell moodily.

"What is to be done now?" he demanded of the warder, when he next saw him alone.

His tone and manner evinced displeasure.

"It will be all right," returned the warder; "I have seen the Hebrew gentleman, and he says he is not ready yet; and I expect you will be able to move as soon as he is ready."

Several days passed, during which the sick prisoner was visited daily by the jail surgeon, and appeared to be growing worse.

On the fifth day he died.

On the evening of that day, two men admitted by the warder, brought in a plain coffin, into which the corpse was lifted.

"Are you going to leave that thing there?" Dr. Langton inquired of the warder, as the undertaker's men left the cell, leaving the coffin on the floor, covered by its lid.

"For the present, doctor," replied the warder, following the men and closing the door.

"Then I call it a great outrage, and I shall complain to the magistrate!" the doctor called after him through the grated aperture above the door.

In about an hour the warder returned, and drew from the breast-pocket of his tunic a small parcel, which he laid upon the shelf that served the prisoner for a table.

"I have just got that from Manasses," he observed.

Dr. Langton opened it eagerly, and found that it contained a letter, and the sum of five thousand roubles in gold.

The warder's eyes gleamed with avidity as he beheld the glittering pile.

"Count it," said the doctor, when he had read the note, and destroyed it by holding it in the flame of the gas.

While the warder was counting the money, he wrote a form of receipt.

"Sign that," he said, when the warder had completed the operation and announced that the amount was what had been stipulated. "And now tell me how and when your part of the contract is to be carried out."

The warder prefaced his reply by taking from under his tunic a small crow-bar, which he concealed among the bedding.

"The sewer is beneath the cell in this corridor," he then said. "That instrument will enable you to break through the floor and the crown of the arch. You will have to listen, and be sure that you are not heard, while at work, by the sentry."

"Faugh!" exclaimed Dr. Langton, with a look of disgust; "am I to wade through the sewer, and risk being drowned by the flood tide?"

"No—no, doctor," said the warder. "But your task will show how you may have escaped—do you see? Well, I will leave this money with you until you see your way out."

He tied up the parcel again, placed it under the pillow, and withdrew.

Dr. Langton sat for some time striving to penetrate the scheme of the warder for his escape.

All that he could comprehend, however, was that he was to be supposed to have escaped by the sewer.

He gave up the puzzle at length, and taking the crow-bar, began to pick out, with its wedge-end, the cement between the stones forming the floor of the cell.

This was hard work at the commencement, and he was not used to hard work.

But when he had picked out a small portion of the cement, he was unable to loosen the stone by using the crow-bar as a lever, and by the same means to render the removal of the remainder of the cement more easy.

It was near midnight, however, before he was able to tilt up the stone, and remove it from its place, for he had to work cautiously, and to leave off whenever he heard the footsteps of the sentry.

He ceased to think of his ghastly fellow-occupant of the cell, while engaged in a task which concentrated upon it all his faculties.

Below the stone was a compact mass of earth and rubbish, which, after loosening it with the crow-bar, he had to remove with his hands, until he had laid bare the crown of the arch beneath which flowed the filthy stream of sewerage.

Thus much of his task had been accomplished, when he failed to lower the gas to a mere speck on the approach of the sentry, in time to prevent the man from detecting it.

"No. 14, why is your gas burning?" inquired the sentry, rapping at the same time on the door of the cell.

"I am reading because I cannot sleep," he replied.

"You must turn off the gas," said the sentry.

The doctor obeyed, and the sentry's measured footsteps began to recede.

The prisoner then retired to rest, and succeeded in sleeping, in spite of the black coffin and its ghastly tenant in close proximity to his bed.

On the following morning he proceeded with his task, working at it at intervals throughout the day.

"You must finish before eight o'clock this evening," said the warder; "I have made the time as late as I could, to allow you to complete your job before the men come for the corpse."

"The corpse!" said the doctor, elevating his eyebrows. "I don't understand."

"It will be all right, doctor," replied the warder. "Manasses sends the men, and if they are true, and not too stupid, you will be a free man before nightfall."

He went out, and Dr. Langton, still perplexed, returned to his task, working hard upon the arch of the sewer, until he had made an opening two feet square in the crown.

Below the opening was a black gulf, from which arose a foul smell, and the sound of running water.

Then he rested from his labor, and awaited the coming of the men whom Manasses was to send, and whose share in his liberation was still a mystery to him.

His watch told him that the time was, in railway parlance, "seven forty-five," when the warder entered and closed the door.

"It is time," said he. "The men will soon be here. Help me to dispose of the corpse."

"Ah, now I comprehend you," returned the prisoner, his countenance becoming radiant.

The warder took the money from beneath the pillow, satisfied himself that it was intact, and concealed it about him.

Then he removed the lid from the coffin, and made a sign to Dr. Langton.

Between them the corpse was lifted out, and launched into the yawning gulf at their feet.

"The ebb tide will carry it into the Neva," said the warder. "Now take the dead man's place in the coffin."

The doctor did not hesitate a moment, but with the assistance of his confederate, deposited himself in the coffin, the lid of which was then replaced.

Then the warder went out, and the doctor was left alone for about ten minutes, in which time the man returned, accompanied by two other rough-looking fellows, who lifted the coffin to a

bier they had brought with them, and bore it from the prison.

CHAPTER V.

THE RESURRECTIONISTS—THE ADVENTURES OF A COFFIN—A SCIENTIFIC SEANCE—A STARTLING EVENT.

SLOWLY, and with becoming gravity, the men, who had been sent by Levi Manasses bore from the prison the coffin containing the living man.

When they were beyond the prison walls, they quickened their pace, going in the direction of the old mansion in which Dr. Langton had taken refuge before his arrest.

They had not far to go, but before the distance was completed they paused, for two policemen were coming towards them, and they had good reasons for not wishing to encounter them.

"What is to be done, Alec?" said one of them to the other, in a hoarse whisper.

"We must run for it," returned Alec. "Come on! Round the corner—quick!"

In another moment they had turned the corner of a by-street, and before the two policemen could reach the spot, they had passed through an unfinished building and reached the rear of an unoccupied house.

Passing his hand through a broken pane of glass, Alec unfastened the window and raised the lower sash.

"In with him," said he, and the coffin was launched without ceremony into the empty room.

The two men followed, and having closed and refastened the window, hastened to conceal themselves in an upper room.

The policemen had not either recognized them, or had lost the scent when they entered the unfinished building, for their hiding-place was not disturbed; but they had not been many minutes in concealment when two men, who had been crouching in the shadow of the wall, which divided the ground in the rear of the unfinished building from a small cemetery, and whom in their haste they had not observed, approached the window of the empty house and looked in.

"This is a rum go, Serge!" exclaimed one of them. "What do they bring a coffin to an empty house for?"

"Is there a corpse in it, I wonder?" said Serge, after a pause, in which his reasoning faculties had failed to supply any solution of the mystery.

"A good thought!" exclaimed the other. "Suppose we try the weight of it? I don't see the bearers."

He entered the room in the same manner as the men in concealment had done, and the latter, fearing that it was the police who had entered, did not move.

"Ay, there is a dead one in it, sure enough," said he, when he had attempted to raise the coffin by the handles. "Now, this is what I call a Godsend, Serge. Lend us a hand, will you?"

Serge stepped into the room, and between them the coffin was passed through the window again, the two men followed, and in another minute the coffin was enveloped in a tarpaulin, and carried off.

To the half-stifled inmate of the coffin these movements were a mystery, for the conversation of the bearers was very imperfectly heard by him.

In a few minutes a pause was made, and the bearers set down the coffin and conversed in whispers until a cart was driven up.

Into this vehicle the coffin was lifted, the two men followed, and the cart was driven rapidly toward the southwestern suburb.

After a drive of nearly half an hour a broad road, bordered by lines of villas, each standing in its own picturesquely-planted grounds was reached, and the cart turned into a narrow, unlighted lane which afforded access to the rear.

In a few minutes it stopped, the two men who had placed the coffin in it alighted, and carried their burden through a garden and up a flight of steps leading to a door at the rear of the house.

The door was opened by a male servant dressed in black, and the coffin was borne into the house.

Then the men departed, after removing the tarpaulin that had covered the coffin, which was left in the darkness and silence of a small uncarpeted and scantily-furnished apartment.

The inmate of the coffin was by this time gasping for breath, and was only restrained by considerations of prudence from making audible intimations of his desire to be released from his unpleasant place of confinement.

Half an hour passed in dead silence, and then he could refrain no longer from tapping as loudly as he could against the inside of the lid.

He listened, and then, reflecting that the sounds were unlikely to be audible beyond the four walls of the room, he shouted:

"Help! Let me out!"

There was no response.

His throat was parched with the stifling atmosphere, and the sound of his voice deadened by the closed coffin.

Another half hour passed, during which he was a prey to ghastly visions of death by suffocation, and horrible recollections of instances in which the living have been buried in the belief that they were dead, and have returned to consciousness only when the grave has closed over them!

He was recalled from these maddening thoughts by the subdued sound of the opening of a door, followed by footsteps in the room, and a murmur of voices.

He strove to cry out, but his parched tongue seemed glued to his mouth, and he could not utter a sound.

He tried to move his right hand, but the muscles seemed powerless, the protracted confinement to one position seeming to have deadened the nerves.

Presently, however, the three or four screws with which the prison warder had deemed it advisable to secure the lid of the coffin were drawn by the black garbed servant, the lid was removed and the gaslight shone on the pallid and bedewed countenance of the inmate.

Dr. Langton had fainted.

"Look here, sir," said the servant, in a tone that indicated surprise.

A stout, middle-aged gentleman, dressed in black, approached the coffin, and surprise dilated his eyes also as he gazed upon its inmate.

"Buried in his clothes!" he exclaimed; "that is strange. And it cannot be the subject I expected. Can those scoundrels have been disappointed, and been led by greed of gain to commit a crime?"

"Such things have been," observed the servant.

At that moment a bell rang.

"See who that is, Ivan," said the stout gentleman. "If it is Dr. Doremikoff, bring him in."

The servant left the room and returned, ushering a little, active, intelligent-looking man, about thirty years of age.

"Good evening, Dr. Ikatchoff," said the newcomer.

"Come here, Doremikoff," said the gentleman. "What do you think of this? Suspicious, eh?"

"Well, it is not usual to bury a corpse in a good suit of black," returned Dr. Doremikoff; "and they do not usually bring subjects in their coffins, do they?"

"It is a mystery," said Dr. Ikatchoff, whose tone and expression of countenance evinced uneasiness.

"Suppose we have it on the table and see whether there are any signs of foul play," suggested Dr. Doremikoff.

The other made a sign to Ivan, who assisted him to lift the insensible form of Dr. Langton from the coffin, and place it upon a marble table.

"It feels quite supple," observed Dr. Ikatchoff.

The bell rang again, and Ivan hurried away in obedience to the summons.

"I see no marks of violence, and smell no odor of prussic acid," observed Dr. Doremikoff, with a perplexed look; "yet the death has been quite recent, and in my opinion, the subject has not been in the ground at all."

Two more gentlemen were ushered in by Ivan, and shook hands with Dr. Ikatchoff and his friend.

The former then communicated to them the suspicions of himself and Dr. Doremikoff, concerning the subject.

"All the better for our purpose," observed one of them; "if you succeed in restoring him to life, he will be able to solve the mystery, which may supply Turguenief with an idea for his next novel."

Dr. Ikatchoff thereupon prepared for the operation a powerful galvanic battery, while Ivan divested the supposed corpse of its coat and vest, and placed a pillow under the head.

The wires of the apparatus were then placed in contact with the chest of the subject, and the learned men watched with anxious interest the progress of the experiment.

At the first shock a visible quiver ran through the form that was stretched supinely upon the operating table.

Then the chest heaved faintly, the livid lips

parted, and the nostrils became dilated, as with natural respiration.

The doctors pressed closer to the table, and watched more eagerly the signs of returning animation.

"That is more than I have ever seen before," whispered one of them.

The electric current was continued, and in a few moments Dr. Langton opened his eyes and looked about him.

"Wonderful!" ejaculated one of the doctors, while Ivan regarded the resuscitated man with as much awe as he would a ghost.

"Marvelous!" said another.

"A modern miracle," ejaculated Dr. Doremikoff.

"Where am I?" said Dr. Langton, slowly raising himself to a sitting posture, and speaking in the French language; "am I with friends?"

"You ought to so esteem us," replied Dr. Ikatchoff. "We have snatched you from the grave, and restored you to life."

Dr. Langton looked from one to another, and then at the galvanic battery, and the wires connected with it.

He began to understand the situation, and was as much amazed with it as it was possible for a man to be in such a perilous position.

Of course there was much that he did not understand, but he had heard enough to show him that he had been supposed to be dead, and that Dr. Ikatchoff believed that he had galvanized him into life.

He turned over on his side, dropped on his feet, and took up his coat and vest, which he proceeded deliberately to put on.

"Cool!" whispered one of the learned men to another.

"Ay," responded the other, "I begin to have doubts about the fellow."

"Gentlemen," said Dr. Langton, "I thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you have done, and wish you good-night."

He had turned in such a manner as to face them all, and now bowed to them collectively.

"It is a hoax," muttered one of the party.

"Stay!" cried Dr. Ikatchoff; "I hear a gentleman say that it is a hoax. I call upon you, sir, to satisfy my friends that no hoax had been played upon them, but that you have been, as I said just now, snatched from the grave, and restored to life."

"Excuse me, sir," returned Dr. Langton. "I have nothing to do with your dealings with resurrectionists, and I decline to make any statement whatever."

"You are an impostor!" exclaimed Dr. Doremikoff, angrily; "you shall not go without an explanation."

Dr. Langton was moving towards the door, but on hearing these words, he turned quickly and snatched up a revolver which he had seen lying upon a sideboard.

"Stand back!" he cried, levelling the weapon at the head of Doremikoff, with a stern countenance, and a finger on the trigger. "If there has been any imposture, I have not been a party to it, and you will seek to detain me at your peril."

Dr. Doremikoff shrank from the leveled pistol, and Dr. Langton backed to the door and opened it.

Stepping into the hall, he opened the front door, laid the revolver upon a table, and banging the door behind him, ran off.

CHAPTER IV.

A PRISON MYSTERY—THE SECRET REVEALED—THE DOCTOR AND THE SHOWMAN—AMONG THE EFFIGIES.

THE warder who had aided Dr. Langton's escape from prison assumed a look of surprise when, on the following morning, the undertaker's men visited the jail for the purpose of removing the corpse of the deceased prisoner.

"It was taken away last night," said he.

"Are you sure?" said one of the men, looking as much surprised as the warder.

"Quite," he replied; "I saw it carried out myself, and having seen it placed in the coffin, there can be no mistake."

The men went away, but in less than an hour the undertaker himself arrived, and asked to see the governor, to whom he stated that some mistake had been made, as he had not sent for the corpse until that morning.

"It is very strange," said the governor, and accompanied by the undertaker, he went in quest of the corrupt warder, whom he desired to open the door of the cell in which the prisoner had died.

The warder obeyed, repeating, as they travers-

ed the corridor of which he had charge, that the corpse had been removed the night before.

The governor was the first to enter the cell, and great and real was his surprise on finding it unoccupied, and a black gulf yawning in the middle of the floor.

"The English prisoner has escaped!" he exclaimed.

"Impossible!" cried the warder, following him into the cell.

"This cannot have been done without assistance, Simonoff," said the governor, sternly.

"But no one has entered the cell except the prisoner, whose corpse was removed last night, the two men who carried it, and myself," said the warder, with an expression of bewilderment.

"But an opening has been made into the sewer, and the prisoner is gone," said the governor. "That opening cannot have been made without some implement, and the manner in which the prisoner obtained the instrument will be a subject of strict investigation."

He examined the cell minutely, without making any remark, and when they quitted it, and the warder had locked the door, he placed a seal on the key-hole, and proceeded to draw up a report of the escape and of the condition in which he had found the cell.

Search was thereupon made for the prisoner who had escaped, and the police, believing that Dr. Langton would lose no time in endeavoring to get out of the country, were on the look-out for him all along the frontier.

We will now see what became of Dr. Langton after his flight from the house of Dr. Ikatchoff.

The suburb in which that house was situated being unknown to him, he was at a loss which way to turn with the least risk of running into the arms of the police.

His first thought was of Levi Manasses, but he knew neither the distance nor the direction of the quarter in which the Jew resided, and the silk handkerchief which he had tied over his head on leaving Dr. Ikatchoff's house, in lieu of a hat, was calculated to attract to him an undesirable degree of attention.

He thought of this as he ran, and observing, when his failing breath obliged him to abate his speed, that he was leaving behind him the gas-illuminated portion of the neighborhood, and that only a few lights twinkled in the direction in which he was proceeding, he began to look about as he went on for some place in which he could conceal himself while deliberating upon his position.

He found himself, however, upon a wide heath, beyond which the lights were still visible, but which were extinguished or obscured as he went on.

The barking of a dog attracted his attention to something that, seen through the obscurity of night, bore a dim resemblance to a loaded wagon; but, as a curve of the road brought it nearer and a light shone from it, looked like the living carriage of some traveling showman or itinerant pedler.

He paused a moment, and then ran towards it.

A stout, middle-aged man, with a large, light-colored beard, pacified the dog, and held the light forward to see who was coming.

"My friend," exclaimed Dr. Langton, breathlessly, "let me step into your house and have a few minutes' conversation with you."

The man regarded him for a moment with a keen scrutiny, and then lowered the steps by which the carriage was entered.

The doctor mounted them and entered the carriage, the door of which was immediately closed by the proprietor.

"My friend," exclaimed the fugitive, "I am in danger. Suspected of participation in a Nihilist conspiracy, although I am really innocent, the police are on my trail, and, unless I can elude them long enough to get out of the country, I shall be arrested, and perhaps sent to Siberia. Will you assist me? You shall be well rewarded for any trouble I may cause you," he added, on observing that the man hesitated.

"I will do my best for you," returned the man. "I daresay I can manage to conceal you until we cross the frontier, in which direction we are proceeding."

The fugitive thanked him, and sat down upon a box.

"I was just going to bed," said his host. "Can you manage to sleep here? To-morrow we can make better provision for your accommodation."

"I am an old traveler and a citizen of the world," returned Dr. Langton; "I can sleep anywhere."

His host then left him, disappearing through an inner door, which he secured with a bolt.

The doctor, rolled up in a railway wrapper, and stretched on the floor, did not sleep so well as he had proclaimed his ability to do; but his philosophy enabled him to find compensation for the discomfort of his situation in the feeling of comparative security.

On the following morning his host introduced his wife, a plump little German woman, and over a capital breakfast, the fugitive related a story of his escape from the police which was more creditable to his powers of imagination than to his love of truth.

We need not relate the doctor's daily experiences of life in a house on wheels, which was dull enough, and rendered more irksome by the necessity of concealment.

Several days after his escape from prison, the living carriage and two other caravans, all painted yellow, with "Karakofsky's Waxwork," in large black letters on the sides, were standing in a field near the town of Pskov.

Dr. Langton was sitting upon a box in one of the exhibition carriages, in which several waxen effigies, covered with linen to protect them from the dust, stood along the sides.

Much of the remaining space was occupied by a large drum, a stuffed ape, and an empty Egyptian mummy case.

"The police!" exclaimed the showman, entering hastily. "Quick! into the mummy case."

He raised the lid as he spoke, and the startled doctor lost no time in lying down in the sarcophagus, which his host immediately covered with the lid, upon the top of which he placed the drum.

Then he retired as quickly as he had entered, and the fugitive awaited the result in trepidation, scarcely daring to breathe.

"This is one of the caravans containing the exhibition," he heard the showman say, a few minutes afterwards, when the footsteps of two other men followed those of his host.

"Uncover the figures," said one of the police. The showman obeyed, and the police, having satisfied themselves that the man of whom they were in search was not in the caravan, disguised as the rebel Pongatcheff, or Emperor of China, kicked the mummy case, and departed.

"That was a squeak," murmured the doctor, as he crept out of the case.

Wilna was reached without any incident worthy of record occurring, and he began to hope that the police had abandoned the search in despair.

During the hours that the exhibition was open to the public, it was deemed advisable for him to occupy a place among the waxen effigies, the only alternative being to conceal himself in the mummy case.

On one of these occasions, when the show was crowded with visitors, he recognized among them Willie Anderson and Devilshoof, and immediately adopted the precaution of averting his face from them.

"This, ladies and gentlemen," said the showman, "is the famous old fortune-teller, Madame Kindener, who had the honor of telling the fortune of his Imperial Majesty, Alexander I; and next to her is the rebel, Pongatcheff. Next to him you see his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of China. This is the Empress Catherine II., in all her glory; and here is Count Orloff, a great man in more senses than one, as you may see for yourselves. This is Borolaski, the Polish dwarf, and next to the little man you have the Shah of Persia. The next figures are that wonderful couple, Ivan and Alexouna Pedrofsky, who lived at Orenburg, and were more than a hundred years old when they died. If they had lived longer they would have been older; and what is more remarkable, there is not a soul living who can say he ever heard them quarrel."

"How long have they been dead?" inquired a peasant, regarding the figures with eyes as widely opened as his mouth was.

"More than a century," replied the showman, passing on to the next figure, which was Dr. Langton. "This," he continued, "is the great philanthropist, John Howard, who passed his life in doing good to his fellow-creatures, and died of a fever caught while visiting the prisons of the southern governments of the Russian empire."

"I say, Anderson, isn't he like the old doctor?" whispered Devilshoof, staring at Dr. Langton, whose features, in spite of the danger of the situation, preserved their immobility.

"John Howard must have been remarkably like him," observed Willie, whose gaze was fixed on the supposed effigy.

"And this, ladies and gentlemen," said the showman, turning to the other side of the car-

van, "is an exact likeness of Julia Pastrana, the hairy woman, who died lately at Moscow. She

He was interrupted by a cry of pain from his fugitive guest, in whose right calf Devilshoof had inserted a pin.

Dr. Langton raised his foot and bestowed upon the acrobat a hearty kick, which sent him sprawling upon the floor of the caravan.

"Seize him!" cried Willie Anderson. "It is Langton, the forger and prison breaker!"

But before the spectators had recovered from their surprise sufficiently to lay a hand upon him, Dr. Langton had forced his way through them, pushing them aside in no gentle manner, and reached the front of the show.

Leaping to the ground, he ran off as fast as he could, pursued by several of the spectators.

The show stood in the rear of some houses in the suburbs, and a short passage afforded access to it.

Through this passage the fugitive darted, crossed the road, and dashed into another passage on the opposite side.

Only the foremost of the pursuers saw the way he had gone, and they soon found themselves at fault.

The fugitive was nowhere to be seen.

He had entered an empty house, ascended to the topmost floor, gained the roof, entered the adjoining house through an open skylight, descended the stairs unseen by the inmates, and passed into the street while his pursuers were searching the empty house.

CHAPTER VII.

WILLIE AND FEDORA—THE JEALOUS CLOWN—THE HORSE AND THE HANDKERCHIEF—THE EXPLOSION.

WE must now return to those persons of our story who were connected at this time with Salamansky's circus.

That famous equestrian establishment was now moving westward, and when we again take up the thread of Willie Anderson's fortunes, was pitched in a field in the outskirts of Konigsberg.

It was nearly noon, and, practice in the ring being concluded, only four persons remained in the arena, namely, Percy Bellingham and Lettie Lennard, who were seated on the ring-fence, and Willie Anderson and the Russian girl, Fedora, who were standing at the ring-door on the opposite side, just under the orchestra.

"There is a little love-making going on over there," observed Percy Bellingham, in a subdued tone, and with a glance towards Willie and Fedora.

Lettie had been looking in that direction, and the expression of her countenance betrayed to him her painful feelings.

"I have seen that for some time," she rejoined, endeavoring to repress a sigh. "It does not surprise me at all. She is a nice girl, and she, perhaps, saved Willie's life."

"Willie is very impressionable to the influence of a fresh face, when it is a tolerably good-looking one," said Percy. "Yours had grown familiar to him before he thought of love-making, and though he likes you, as we all do, it is the liking of a young fellow for a kind sister."

"I don't think he has ever thought of me in any other way," observed Lettie.

"I wonder he has not," said Percy, caressing an incipient mustache. "Boys are very apt to fall in love with girls older than themselves."

"And to fall in love, or fancy that they have, many times before they settle," rejoined Lettie, with a light laugh. "I daresay he will not marry Fedora."

"Anderson would not do anything dishonorable; I am well assured of that. But, if he is heart-whole when he recovers his rights, and finds himself a baronet and a man of property, what is more natural than that, when he does marry, he should marry a girl in his own proper sphere? And there will be my sister, the only daughter of his next neighbor, Squire Bellingham."

"I see it now," said Lettie, with her dark eyes turned towards the sawdust.

"It is different with me, Lettie," continued her companion; "I have been brought up a gentleman, and have always known that, in the course of time, I shall be Squire Bellingham, of the Old Quarry House. The knowledge has not prevented me from laying my heart at your feet, and nothing is likely to change my feelings towards you."

Lettie moved from the ring fence, and looked again towards Willie and the Russian girl.

"I am going, Fedora," she said.

"You are not displeased with me on account of what I have said?" Percy asked, as he dropped into the ring.

"No," she replied, offering him her hand.

He pressed it warmly, and they parted, Lettie crossing the ring to meet Fedora, and Percy remaining where she had left him, gazing after her, until he was joined by Willie Anderson.

"What does the fair Muscovite think of it?" he asked, with a bantering smile.

"Of what?" asked Willie.

"Of the prospect of becoming Lady What's-the-name?" returned Percy.

"I don't know," said Willie; "I have not consulted her; and I don't, for that matter, know what to think of it myself. I daren't return to England; and between the doctor and my uncle I seem to have the choice of the frying pan and the fire."

"I would not give it up, if I were you, Anderson. A baronetcy and a fine estate in Kent, the garden of England, is worth a little risk and trouble. Why not write to the lawyers?"

"And have a detective sent over, with a warrant for my arrest and extradition," returned Willie, with a shrug.

"Well, I don't know what else can be done," said Percy, thoughtfully; "I don't think, though, that there would be any danger in writing. The doctor has proved such a bad lot that I have no faith in his story of your uncle's enmity toward you; and we know that it was he, and not your uncle, who got you kidnapped in St. Petersburg."

The subject then dropped, and our young friends left the circus.

As they passed through the ring doors, a man arose in the orchestra, which was a balcony above that entrance, and looked down after them with a pale face, distorted with the fiercest passions that agitate humanity.

It was Hyppolyte, the French clown.

He shook his clenched hand, and ground his teeth as he saw them leave, and then descended.

"I know now why the girl will not listen to me," he muttered; "it is because her heart is given to that cub, the English tumbling boy. But I will soon have him out of the way, and then, whether I succeed with Fedora or not, shall be revenged on both."

There was an act to be performed that evening in which Hyppolyte and a trained horse of the company had parts, and was to be followed by one in which the same horse was to be ridden by Willie Anderson.

"That is a very clever horse, Herr Brunn," observed the clown, regarding the animal with well simulated admiration.

"A very clever horse, Hyppolyte," responded the ring-master.

"Can he play at hide and seek?" inquired the clown.

"Try him," replied Brunn; "he can do anything, except talk; and I am not sure that he he could not do that, if he liked; I can only say that I have never heard him."

Having blindfolded the horse with a handkerchief, Hyppolyte ran to the other side of the ring, and buried in the sawdust another handkerchief.

"Hot boiled beans and very good butter!" he cried, with an assumption of gleeful anticipations of the animal's discomfiture.

The horse paced round the ring until he came to the spot where the handkerchief was hidden, scraped with his right fore-foot until he discovered it, and picked it up with his teeth.

"Ah, you told him," exclaimed the clown. "Now you stand away from him, Herr Brunn, and see how I will trick him."

He pretended to hide the handkerchief at the same spot as before, and then ran a few yards further, and buried it in another place.

"Hot boiled beans and very good butter!" he cried again.

Then he ran a little further, and stooping down again, buried something in the sawdust, which he took stealthily and quickly from one of the capacious pockets of his trunks.

The horse paced around as before, stopping for a moment at the spot where the handkerchief had first been concealed, and then going on to the right place, where he discovered it.

The clown scratched his head as if quite at a loss to account for the horse's intelligence, and then removed the handkerchief from the animal's eyes.

Willie Anderson then bounded into the ring in flesh-colored tights and spangled trunks, and threw a forward somersault, and then vaulted to the animal's back.

The band played, and the horse began to career around the ring, and Willie executed a variety of acrobatic feats on the animal's back.

At the second course, one of the horse's forefeet struck the object which Hyppolyte had buried in the sawdust, after concealing the handkerchief.

A sharp report immediately startled the spectators, the horse swerved violently, and Willie was thrown from the animal's back.

A scene of excitement and confusion immediately ensued.

The spectators arose from their seats in alarm, and many of the women screamed.

Percy Bellingham, Devilshoof, and other members of the company, who were standing at the ringdoors in the circus uniform, ran to the assistance of Willie, who, as he was turning at the moment of the explosion, and the horse had swerved inward, had been thrown between the animal and the ring fence, which his head struck as he fell.

"Carry him to the dressing-room," said the manager, whom the noise of the explosion had brought into the ring; and the young acrobat, who was stunned by the concussion, was borne away between Percy Bellingham and a young German equestrian.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the manager, addressing the spectators, while the ring-master examined the horse, which proved to have escaped without injury, "I beg you to be seated. The rider is, I trust, not seriously hurt, and there is no cause for alarm."

While he was speaking, Devilshoof examined the spot where the explosion had occurred, and found a shattered metal case, which had been filled with some explosive compound, and fired by means of a percussion cap, struck by the horse's foot.

"Look here, sir," he exclaimed, showing the remains of the case to the manager.

"It is something like a railway fog-signal," said the manager. "How can it have got there? It must have been placed there with the diabolical design of causing an accident."

"That's the man who did it!" exclaimed Devilshoof, pointing at Hyppolyte, while his dark eyes flashed with indignation; "I saw him stoop down and put something in the sawdust, after he had hidden the handkerchief."

The clown turned pale at this denunciation, and for a moment was too confused to speak.

"This must be inquired into," said the manager, after a glance at the Frenchman; "come with me, both of you, to the dressing-room."

He left the ring as he spoke, and was followed by Devilshoof and the clown, the former taking care to bring up the rear.

A groom led out the horse, and another brought in Brunette, while the band, which had ceased playing when the explosion occurred, struck up again as Lettie Lennard tripped into the ring, and was assisted to the pad by the ring-master.

While the brown mare careered around the ring, with Lettie posed in a graceful attitude on the pad, amid the applause of the spectators, Willie Anderson laid in the dressing-room, still insensible, with his head resting upon the coat of Percy Bellingham, rolled up into an extempore pillow.

A surgeon knelt on one side, feeling his pulse with one hand and his head with the other; on the other stood the manager, whose countenance evinced anxiety for the victim of the outrage, and stern indignation against the perpetrator.

Percy Bellingham stood near him regarding him with similar feelings, and Hyppolyte near the door, struggling to suppress both his rage and fear.

"Is he much hurt?" inquired the manager.

"I trust not," replied the surgeon. "The only external sign of injury is a swelling of the posterior portion of the scalp. I shall be better able to form an opinion to-morrow."

Willie presently recovered consciousness, and beyond a slight degree of pallor, seemed little the worse for the fall.

"Has there been any quarrel between you and Hyppolyte?" inquired the manager.

Willie replied in the negative, and testified surprise at the question.

"You heard the accusation," said the manager, turning to the clown. "What have you to say?"

"It is false!" replied Hyppolyte, whose voice was hoarse with excitement; "I put nothing in the sawdust, why should I?"

"I saw you," said Devilshoof.

The clown turned fiercely upon him, but the presence of others restrained him.

"Two or three persons who were sitting near saw something placed in the sawdust," observed Percy Bellingham; "I heard them say so, and so did Wenzel, who helped to carry Willie from the ring."

"Leave the circus," said the manager, addressing the clown; "you will hear from me to-morrow."

With a savage scowl at Willie, Percy, and Devilshoof, Hyppolyte went out.

Corroborative evidence of his guilt was soon obtained, and he received his dismissal next day, with an intimation that he would be given into custody if he was found near the circus, and that only the removal of the circus that day prevented Herr Salamansky from prosecuting him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DOCTOR AND THE JEW—THE HAUNTED INN—THE APPARITION—THE PISTOL-SHOT.

Two men were seated at a table in a private room of the "Silver Cross," an ancient second-rate inn in the environs of Königsberg, on the road from that old capital of Prussia to Berlin.

They are both known to the reader, and we need not, therefore, pause to describe them.

One was Dr. Langton, the other Levi Manasses.

There was wine on the table, and both men were smoking; the doctor one of the best cigars to be obtained in the inn, and Manasses a large-bowled pipe, with a long cherry-wood stem.

"Had all gone well in St. Petersburg, we should have netted a few thousands, which were much wanted," observed Dr. Langton. "As it was, all we raised was required for secret service, and my designs with regard to that lad were frustrated; but what avail lamentations over spilled milk? If this new venture succeeds—"

"I don't know why it should fail," said Manasses.

"Nor I," returned the doctor, with a just perceptible smile. "We never do know such things. If we could foresee everything, failures would never happen. Well, if it succeeds, we shall be rich, as rich as we have been going to be. I don't know how many times. You have no doubt of the trustworthiness of your friends both here as well as in Dantzic, I suppose?"

"None," replied Manasses. "If I had I should not trust them."

"Just so," said Langton, with the same smile as before. "Well, we will drink to the success of our new enterprise," he added, filling the glasses.

"With all my heart," said Manasses.

"To-morrow I start for Berlin, leaving you to complete the arrangements here," said Langton. "By-the-by, did you see the ghost last night?" he asked, as he set down his glass, with a smile playing about his mouth.

"The ghost! No. What ghost?" returned Manasses.

"Don't you know that this inn has had for years the reputation of being haunted?" the doctor asked. "I don't know whether it is your room or mine that is favored with his ghostship's visits, but it is in this part of the house I know, for I heard the story five years ago, when business brought me to this town for the first time. But perhaps you do not believe in ghosts?"

"I do not," returned Manasses, with a shrug. "Surely you don't believe in such things?" he asked, with a smile.

"Why not?" asked the doctor. "I cannot say that I do, or that I do not, for how is any opinion to be formed in the absence of evidence? I have never seen a ghost, and if I met a person who declared that he had been so fortunate, I should probably regard his belief as a delusion; but I really see no reason why the spirits of the departed should not be visible to the living if they have any existence at all."

"Ah!" ejaculated Manasses, emitting a great whiff of the smoke.

"Perhaps one of us may be permitted to see the apparition to-night," observed Langton, his dark eyes twinkling as he stole a furtive glance at his companion. "They say that it is the ghost of a pedler lad, who was murdered by the hostler, for the sake of his pack of trinkets and the purse that contained his savings."

"I don't care to hear of such things," returned Manasses, with a shiver.

The doctor dropped the subject and reverted to the scheme of fraud in which they were engaged, which served them for conversation until they retired to their respective chambers.

Their rooms adjoined each other, both opening into a corridor on the other side of the house.

The inn was an old one, and the rooms were wainscoted, lighted by casements, and contained much of the furniture of the last century, while some of the decorations dated from the sixteenth.

In the chamber allotted to Manasses, for instance, there was some old tapestry, representing hunting scenes, and a life-size portrait of a gentleman in the costume of the sixteenth century.

"I wonder if this is the room," he murmured, as he turned the key in the lock and looked around him. "It looks guesome enough, more dismal to night, I think, than it did last night. I wish I had not been told of this thing."

He held the light before him as he advanced into the room, and then raised it, and looked around upon the walls again.

The dark waiscoat, the faded tapestry drooping to pieces as it hung, the sombre countenance of the portrait, the heavy old furniture, all combined to convey an impression of dreariness to the mind.

He undressed slowly, and having ascertained that the moon was shining brightly, he drew back the window curtains before extinguishing his candle, and stepped into bed.

Some time elapsed before he could compose himself to sleep.

Sleep came at last, however, and in that sleep he dreamt that he was in a strange house, oppressed by a fear of something which was not well defined in his mind, and that he saw a phantom—a dark, dimly outlined figure, that glided noiselessly into the room without opening the door.

With a start he awoke.

A gasping cry, half choked by the fear that prompted it, burst from his lips as his widely dilated eyes encountered the figure of a pale lad, clothed in red, standing near the foot of the bed, distinctly defined by the silvery light of the moon.

His eyes once fixed upon the apparition, he seemed not to have the power to withdraw his gaze.

The dark eyes of the boy were fixed upon him with a stony glare, as if they were those of a corpse that had been galvanized into seeming life.

For a few moments the apparition remained motionless, and then glided towards the waving tapestry.

Just then a cloud floated athwart the moon, rendering objects within the chamber dim and indistinct.

When it had passed, and the moonbeams streamed through the diamond panes of the casement again, the apparition had vanished.

Manasses raised himself on his elbow by a powerful effort, and then sank back again; and with the reaction of his highly-wrought feelings came unconsciousness.

Dr. Langton had retired to rest without thinking very much about the apparition which was said to haunt that portion of the inn.

When he had been asleep some time he awoke, without being conscious of his slumber having been disturbed, though he knew, by the darkness of the room, that the dawn of another day was not near.

There was only a faint light in the room, as the moon shone on the other side of the house, and he had not followed the example of Levi Manasses by opening the window curtains.

Profound silence reigned throughout the house while he listened, wondering what had been the cause of his awaking.

Presently, however, he heard a slight sound, such as would be occasioned by the cautious opening of the door.

It seemed to proceed, however, from that side of the room which adjoined the chamber of Levi Manasses, and not from the door.

He looked in that direction, but the dim light showed him nothing but the mouldering and moth-eaten tapestry.

He was about to turn over and try to compose himself for sleep again, when he was startled by the sudden apparition of a pale lad, clothed in red, which seemed to glide from the tapestry, and stand motionless near the foot of the bed.

"Who are you?" he demanded, raising himself upon his left arm and straining his eyes into the semi-obscurity in which the apparition stood.

Receiving no reply, he stretched forth his right hand and grasped a revolver which he had laid upon a small table.

"Speak, or I will fire!" he exclaimed, pointing the weapon at the head of the apparition.

He thought that some lad attached to the inn might have contrived to enter the room and conceal himself behind the tapestry for the purpose of robbery.

Determining to give the intruder a fright, but unwilling to wound him, he turned the muzzle of the pistol a little aside, and fired.

The report rang through the house, and the

room was filled with white smoke and a sulphurous smell.

He could see nothing for the smoke, but, as he had heard nothing, he concluded that the boy was still there.

He remained for a few moments in the same position, therefore, waiting for the smoke to clear away.

Then bare feet pattered along the corridor, and he heard voices asking what was the matter, and in which room the pistol had been fired.

Slipping out of bed on the side next the door, he hastily drew on his trousers, and opened the door.

"It was I who fired," said he, addressing the landlord, who stood without with a light in his hand. "Come in."

The man entered, and he closed the door and glanced towards the foot of the bed.

The light carried by the landlord, and the partial dispersion of the smoke by the opening of the door, showed him that the apparition had disappeared.

"This is very strange!" he exclaimed, glancing around the room. "Is there any other mode of entering this room than by that door?"

The landlord, whose eyes were following his own, replied in the negative.

"No secret door or sliding panel?" added Langton, raising the tapestry and looking along the partition. "I have heard of such things in old houses."

"Why do you think so? What has happened?" inquired the landlord.

"I saw a lad in the room, and I fired the pistol to frighten him, as he would not answer when I asked who he was," the doctor replied, still searching the room. "But how can he have got out? The door was locked, as you know, and I didn't hear a sound after I fired."

"A lad?" said the landlord, beginning to look frightened.

"A pale lad, strangely dressed in red," replied Langton, looking intently at him.

"You have seen the ghost!" cried the landlord, with terror-blanching face and widely-dilated eyes.

"Bah!" ejaculated the doctor, with a scornful smile. "There must be some secret entrance to the room, which has been used by some young vagabond to play off a practical joke, or for a worse purpose."

The landlord went out without another word, and the doctor returned to his bed, where he thought over the cause of the alarm until he fell asleep again.

CHAPTER IX.

SIR GUY DEVEREL—DEADMAN'S CORNER—THE GHOST SEEN AGAIN—FEAR AND REMORSE.

ON a gloomy autumn evening, when dark clouds were scudding swiftly across the misty moon, and rain fell heavily at frequent intervals, Sir Guy Deverel alighted from a train without an attendant and with very little luggage.

"Get me a fly, porter, and carry my luggage to it," said he.

The man took his trunk and hat-case, and left the platform, Sir Guy following him.

"Can that be Sir Guy Deverel?" a lady whispered to her husband, upon whose arm she was leaning, as they walked to their carriage.

"He must be greatly changed if it is," observed the gentleman; "but I should say that man is a dozen years older than Guy Deverel."

"I caught but a glimpse of his features," said the lady; "and I thought they were like Sir Guy's; but he has been so long away from England that I think we should have heard of his return had it been expected."

Sir Guy Deverel had stepped into a fly, upon which the porter had placed his luggage.

He was indeed very much changed, presenting the appearance of an old man while yet in the prime of life.

His hair had become whiter even during the time that had elapsed since he had last left Paris; there were lines on his brow and cheeks, which had not been traced by the hand of Time; and his slow and faltering steps were more suggestive of the patriarch of seventy than of the middle-aged English gentleman.

As he sat in the fly, his dark eyes were cast downward, and the gloom of remorse and despair seemed to overshadow his countenance.

Thus he sat until the vehicle began to ascend the hill between the town and the old mansion at Deadman's Corner, which had so long had the bad repute of being haunted.

Then he looked towards the dusky plantations by which the hall was surrounded, and heaved a sigh.

The house could not be distinguished through the gloom, but he knew that no lights shone from the windows on that side, or they would have twinkled through the trees.

The hill was ascended more slowly than the former part of the drive had been performed, and he could hear the wind moaning among the old trees, and the rain pattering upon the stony road, and the withered leaves that the wind had swept up against the fence.

"Am I to drive up to the house, sir?" the flyman asked, as he brought the vehicle to a stand before the park gates.

"Certainly," replied the baronet. "Would you have me walk up?"

The driver made no reply, but got down from his box, and threw open the gates.

Then he clambered to his seat again, and drove up the gloomy, grass-grown avenue.

Sir Guy looked towards the sombre pile which closed the prospect, and shivered.

All at once a gasping cry burst from his lips, his eyes opened widely for a moment, and then he withdrew his gaze from the mansion, and fell back on the seat.

From one of the upper rooms a flickering light had suddenly gleamed, and a female figure clothed in white from head to foot had appeared at the window with the arms extended towards the avenue.

As the baronet shrank from the startling sight with a shiver and a groan, the fly stopped again.

"Did you see that, sir?" inquired the driver, stooping from his box, and speaking as plainly as his chattering teeth would allow him.

"Yes—yes, I saw something," Sir Guy replied, in a feeble, hesitating manner.

"They say it is often seen," said the flyman; "but it has never been my lot to see it before, and I hope I shall never see such a thing again. I declare it has turned all my blood cold."

"Turn back," said the baronet; "I have changed my mind. I—I think I will not go to the hall to-night."

"Where shall I drive you, sir?" inquired the flyman, who was not at all sorry for his fare's change of purpose.

"To the inn opposite the gates," replied Sir Guy.

The vehicle was turned around, and in a few minutes it was drawn up before the public house at which our story opened.

The flyman had not recovered the natural hue of his countenance when he dismounted and opened the door, and his teeth still chattered audibly.

Sir Guy was too pale for the sight he had just witnessed to blanch his cheeks, but his hand trembled as he drew forth his purse and gave the driver his fare.

"Can I have a bed here and a private sitting-room?" he inquired of the hostess.

"Well, I don't know about a private room, sir," said she, with an air of doubt. "For what time might you require it, sir?"

"Probably for to-night only," he replied.

"There's a fire in the parlor, sir; and there's no one there," said the hostess.

"But I have letters to write—important papers to examine, and I do not wish to be interrupted," returned Sir Guy. "If I cannot have a private room here, I must go down to the town."

He wished to avoid this alternative, lest he should be recognized at the hotel; but for the same reason he desired a private room.

The landlady did not recognize him, having come to the house since his departure from the hall; but some one who would do so might come into the public parlor to which she invited him.

"Come this way, sir," said the landlady, after a moment's reflection. "Carry the gentleman's luggage to the front door, Fanny," she added, addressing a stout, rosy-cheeked servant, and then leading the way into her own private sitting-room.

"This will do," said the baronet, as he dropped upon a chair near the fire. "Bring me writing materials—paper, pen and ink, sealing wax, and a large envelope."

"Any refreshments, sir?"

"Nothing at present, thank you," he replied; "you may bring me a biscuit, and a glass of sherry in about an hour."

Returning to the bar, the hostess found the flyman still there, with a steaming tumbler of brandy and water before him, in earnest conversation with Fanny.

"Jim Mason has seen the ghost, ma'am," said the latter, with a shudder at the recollection of what the flyman had told her.

"You have?" exclaimed the landlady, opening her blue eyes to their utmost capacity. "Is it a woman, as others say who have seen it?"

"It was like a woman in a nightgown, or a shroud, with something over the head, so that only her face could be seen," Jim Mason replied; "it gave me such a turn, you can't think; and I ain't got over it yet. I stopped directly, or it may be it was the horse that stopped from fright; and the gentleman, he saw it, too, and he told me to turn back, and set him down here."

"He was going up to the hall, then?" said the landlady.

"Yes; if he had not seen the ghost," replied Jim Mason.

"But there's nobody at the hall except the servants," observed the landlady; "I wonder who he can be."

Upon this point the flyman could give no information, and having drunk his brandy and water, he departed.

When the hostess carried up to her guest the modest refreshment he had ordered, she found him writing with an air of weariness and dejection.

"Thank you," said he, looking up from his task; "if I require anything more, I will ring."

He sipped his wine, and leaned back in the landlady's arm chair.

"I suppose," he added, with a forced and feeble smile, the "flyman mentioned the fright he had?"

"Yes, sir," returned the landlady, whom his last remark arrested on the threshold of the apartment; "the poor man seemed to have quite a scare."

"Such a sight was startling enough," said he, trying to repress a shudder at the recollection, and only partially succeeding. "Has the—has it been seen before?"

"Often, sir," she replied; "I can't say that I have ever seen it myself, but many's the story I have heard of its been seen, and always the same."

"How long is the house supposed to have been haunted?" the baronet inquired.

"A dozen years or more, they say," replied his hostess. "Ever since Sir Guy Deverel went abroad, and left the place to fall into desolation and decay."

"Have you ever heard any reason why such appearances should be seen?" Sir Guy asked.

"No, sir," she replied; "it is a mystery. There were deaths in the house before Sir Guy went away, as there have been in old family places; but none within the memory of any person living that's been out of the ordinary course of nature."

The baronet asked no more questions, and she withdrew.

He continued to write for some time longer, pausing at intervals to sip his wine, and eat a morsel of biscuit, but at length he gathered up a number of closely-written sheets of paper, and placed them in an envelope, which he closed and endorsed.

He sat a little time longer gazing into the fire, and apparently lost in thought.

Then he sighed heavily, and extended his hand as if he would have rung a bell, but finding no bell-pull, he arose and opened the door.

The bar was in darkness, the house having been closed some time, but on hearing the door open, his hostess bustled out of the public parlor, and called to Fanny for a light.

"I will retire now, if you will have the goodness to show me my room," said he.

"Show the gentleman his room, Fanny," said the landlady.

To reach the stairs they had to cross the passage, and as they did so, an elderly man issued from the public parlor.

"Good night, Mrs. Santer," said he; but as he spoke, he saw Sir Guy Deverel crossing the passage, and at sight of him he paused, staring in open-mouthed surprise and wonder—surprise at seeing the baronet, whom he recognized, after so long an absence from England, and wonder at finding him a guest in an obscure little inn, close to the gates of his own park.

He waited until Sir Guy was out of sight, and then approached Mrs. Santer, to give audible expression to the emotions which had been raised within him by the baronet's unexpected appearance.

"Lord ha' mussy!" he ejaculated, in a subdued tone; "who'd have thought of seeing him, and here, too? I should as soon have thought of seeing the Prince of Wales at this bar."

"Why, who is he?" the hostess asked, her eyes opening as widely as his own had done a moment before.

"Sir Guy Deverel!" he replied; "I knowed him as soon as I saw him. What a strange thing that he should have come home sudden like, and quite unexpected, for I know he warnt expected."

for I see the old man up at the house only this afternoon."

"Perhaps that is why he didn't go up to the hall," observed Mrs. Santer; "but it could hardly be that, either," she added, immediately, as she remembered what Jim Mason had told her.

"Why not?" the old man asked, for he saw by her last remark, and the expression of her countenance, that something had crossed her mind to which she had not given utterance.

"Why," returned Mrs. Santer, "Jim Mason drove him up from the station and was driving up the avenue opposite, when they saw the ghost, and the gentleman told him to turn back, and set him down here."

"Save us!" ejaculated the old man, turning a shade paler. "And they both saw it, eh?"

"So Jim Mason says," returned the hostess; "and preciously frightened he was. He looked like a ghost himself, and his hand shook so he could hardly hold the glass he was drinking out of."

"It's a bad sign. The appearance of that figure means evil to some one."

"Did Sir Guy say anything?" asked the man.

"He just mentioned that the flyman had been frightened, and then he asked whether it had been seen before, and whose ghost it was supposed to be, and how long it had haunted the house."

"Well, he'll go up to the hall to-morrow, perhaps," said the old man, reflectively. "It's a queer thing, though—very queer. Good-night, Mrs. Santer."

"Good-night, Mr. Taylor," responded the hostess, and then the old man went out, and the house was locked for the night.

Sir Guy Deverel arose late on the following morning, looking even more pale and haggard than he had the preceding night; he lingered long over his breakfast and the newspaper, which were taken, at his desire, into his bedroom, and then descended to the bar, with his hat on, and carrying his bag.

"I will send for my trunk," he observed, as he passed the front of the bar, and then passed out, having been seen by no one who had recognized him, with the exception of the old man who had revealed his name to the landlady.

He crossed the road, and threw open the lodge gate, raising his eyes towards the hall as he passed into the avenue, and shuddering as he thought of the sight he had seen the night before.

The yellow leaves were falling upon the grass-grown drive, along the sides of which they had drifted into masses, giving a melancholy aspect to the long avenue, which had been so smooth and trim when he left England.

He walked slowly up to the house, sighing at intervals, and shuddering whenever his gaze wandered from the evidences of neglect and decay which everywhere met it to the window at which the apparition had been visible the preceding night.

He mounted the steps leading to the front door and rang the bell.

After some delay the door was opened by an elderly woman, who stared at him in speechless surprise for a moment, and then made way for him to enter.

CHAPTER X.

DEVEREL AT THE HALL—THE BLUE CHAMBER—THE GHOST—A SUDDEN DEATH.

"I AM still recognizable, I see," Sir Guy observed, as he stepped into the hall.

"You are a good deal altered, sir," she stammered. "Dear me! We didn't expect you so sudden, and there's no fires lighted, 'cept in the kitchen, and no beds aired, and nothing."

"You did not expect me, of course, and you are not to blame, Mrs. Card," rejoined Sir Guy. "Light a fire in the library, and then in the dining-room and my bed-room. I am not sure that I shall sleep here, but you may as well prepare for my doing so."

He passed on to the library, and dropped into an easy chair with an air of weariness.

"It's the master," said Mrs. Card, as she bustled into the kitchen, which her husband had just entered, carrying a basket containing vegetables.

"The master!" echoed the old man. "Sir Guy? Never!"

"It is, though," she returned. "Who'd have thought of his coming so sudden and unexpected, after being away so many years? You might have knocked me down with a feather when I opened the door and saw him standing there, like the ghost of himself."

"Is he so much altered, then?" said her husband.

"I declare, I hardly knowed him," she rejoined. "He looked like a feeble old man. But I mustn't stand talking here, when there's fires to light, and I don't know what all to be done."

With a bundle of wood in one hand, and a scuttle of coal in the other, she proceeded to the library, where she succeeded in making a fire, after a protest, in the form of several downward puffs of smoke from the damp and long-disused chimney.

Sir Guy arose as she left the room, wheeled his chair around, and sat down before the fire.

He soon fell into a profound reverie, from which he was aroused by a tap at the door.

He started nervously, and it was not until the tap had been repeated that he could command his voice sufficiently to bid the applicant for admission to come in.

"What will you please to take for luncheon, sir?" inquired Mrs. Card.

"Anything—a chop and a glass of beer, I think," he replied, and then he relapsed into his reverie, until the old housekeeper informed him that luncheon awaited him in the dining-room.

He arose almost mechanically, and proceeded to that apartment, which, in the meantime, had undergone the process of dusting.

He had scarcely entered it, however, when his eyes encountered the portrait of his brother, the late baronet, and he shrank from it, averting his gaze.

"Not here!" he muttered, as he took the tray from the table and carried it into the library.

"Not here, with his eyes upon me!"

Mrs. Card regarded him with surprise, with which a little wonder was mingled, when, responding to his summons to take away the tray, she found him in the library; but she made no remark.

"Mrs. Card," said he, as she was about to retire, "there are strange stories told about a ghost, which is said to have been in this house. Have you, or has your husband, seen anything to alarm you?"

"Lor, no, sir," she replied, a little confusedly; "we have seen nothing of the sort, and I don't believe anybody else has; but there has been some silly talk about something being seen; how it originated I can't say, sir."

Sir Guy said no more, and the old woman left the room, leaving him thinking of what she had said, and contrasting it with his own experience of the previous evening.

"I saw it," he murmured, shuddering at the recollection; "and I know whose face I saw, pale as it was. Dare I remain here until night? If I encounter it at arm's length, I shall betray myself to those about me."

He glanced fearfully around the room as he arose, and then stood for some time with his back to the fire, lost in thought again, and unable to resolve upon the course which he would pursue.

At length he roused himself by a powerful effort, and, unlocking his bag, took from it a key; then locked it again, and carried it up to the chamber which had been his own before he left England.

There also the brush and duster had been at work, and a good fire had done much to dispel the damp and rusty air, and render the aspect of the chamber more cheerful.

He just glanced around him, and then proceeded to the chamber which had been his brother's, and had not been occupied since Sir Rupert's death.

There all was dreariness and dust, and a chill struck him as he stood in it, without any definite purpose, but impelled by a nervous restlessness which he could not subdue.

On the dressing-table lay a morocco case, covered with dust.

He took it up, opened it, and saw a photograph of a beautiful woman.

"Ah!" he ejaculated; "the face that I saw last night! Infernal remembrancer! Why did I come to this room?"

Dashing the case upon the table he left the room, and wandered from one apartment to another until he reached the ante-room to that which, in their conversation in Paris, had been mentioned by Dr. Langton as the blue chamber.

Unlocking the door with the key which he had taken from the bag, he entered, with his gaze fixed on the door before him, and locked it on the inside.

For several minutes he hesitated to advance further.

Standing motionless just within the room, he gazed towards the door of the blue chamber, as if he feared that it would open and reveal the

phantom that had troubled his thoughts since the previous evening, and listened intently, as if he half expected to hear sounds from the other side.

He heard no sound, yet he hesitated still, agitated by two antagonistic impulses, one of which urged him forward, while the other held him back.

At length the former prevailed, and he advanced to the inner door, stood for a moment irresolute, then opened it, and looked in.

That grim object, which looked like a black cross, still lay upon the floor.

For a moment he gazed upon it, without approaching any nearer to it, and then he turned away with a shudder of horror, and closed the door.

Hurrying through the ante-room, he unlocked the door, and stepped into the corridor, then relocked it, taking away the key, and descended to the library.

There he sat before the fire brooding over the recollection of the past until midnight.

Then he took his light, opened the door very cautiously, and descended the stairs noiselessly.

On reaching the hall he set down his light, and with a crowbar which he found there, raised several of the flags with which it was paved.

This was a work of considerable difficulty for a man who was totally unused to the work, and was worn out by years of ever-present horror and remorse; but he worked with desperate energy, and having laid bare a space six feet by three, he proceeded to remove the earth beneath to a depth of a couple of feet with a shovel.

When his task was accomplished, he rested a while, and wiped the perspiration from his pallid countenance.

The worst was to come, and he felt that it was so, yet was resolved to complete the grim work which he had commenced.

Cautiously he ascended the stairs, and crept along the corridor in the direction of the blue chamber.

He was within a few yards of the ante-room when he heard a sound as of the opening of a door, and turning quickly, shading the light with his hand, and trembling in an undefined terror, he beheld a sight that struck him motionless and speechless, as if he had suddenly been turned into stone.

Advancing towards him with slow and measured steps, was a female figure, in a long, white garment.

The countenance was pale as that of a corpse, and the eyes had the fixed and expressionless stare of orbs from which the soul no longer looks through the retina.

With pallid cheeks and widely-dilated eyes, Sir Guy saw the figure advance with scarcely audible footsteps.

As it came slowly on, seeming to glide rather than to walk, he recognized the features as those of the woman whose portrait he had seen that day, and of the apparition he had seen the previous night.

As the figure came within a couple of yards of the spot whereon he stood, his overwrought feelings found expression in a wild cry that blended in one voice remorse, horror and despair, and throwing up his arms he fell prostrate upon the floor.

The light was extinguished in its fall, and when Card and his wife, alarmed by the cry and the heavy fall, made their appearance in the corridor with a light, the apparition had disappeared.

"It is Sir Guy!" exclaimed the old man, with a look of mingled surprise and fear. "What can he have been wandering in this part of the house at this hour for?"

"Has he had a fit?" said his wife, shivering at a little distance; "or can he have seen—"

"Never mind what he has seen," returned Card, endeavoring to raise the senseless form of the baronet. "Get some brandy—quick! or stay here while I get it, and run down to Mrs. Santer's, and get somebody to ride for a doctor."

"But, Card," said his wife, "I can't—"

The old man did not wait to hear the conclusion of the sentence, but ran off for the brandy, put on his coat, hat and boots in less time than he had ever invested himself in them before, and quitted the house.

A surgeon arrived an hour afterwards, but he was too late.

Guy Deverel was dead!

CHAPTER XI.

GUY DEVEREL'S CONFESSION—THE SECRET OF THE BLUE CHAMBER—WHO WAS SHE?

INTELLIGENCE of the mysterious and sudden

death of Guy Deverel was forwarded by the next post to the nearest relative known to Card and his wife, and to his solicitors, Messrs. Crafter & Carson, who had had the management of all his affairs during his absence from England.

An early train on the second morning after the strange event brought down Mr. Crafter, a grave-looking man, with an expression of keen intellect about the upper part of his dark-complexioned countenance, and a large proportion of silvery lines among the dark hair that curled about his well-shaped head.

"This is a very sad affair, Mrs. Card, and awfully sudden," said he, as he stood before the fire in the dining-room.

"That it be, sir," responded the old woman.

"Tell me all about it," said he, "for as yet I know nothing but the bare fact of the death."

Mrs. Card then related, very circumstantially, the unexpected arrival of the deceased at the hall, and the finding of him, dead or dying, in the corridor.

"Had he been in bed?" Mr. Crafter asked.

"No, sir; his bed had not been touched."

"What could have taken him to that part of the house so long after he had gone to his room?" inquired the lawyer.

"That's a mystery, sir," replied Mrs. Card. "We think—Card and I, sir—that he may not have been quite right in his head; for one or two very strange things have come to our knowledge since, and we don't know what to make of them."

"Indeed," said Mr. Crafter, seating himself in an arm-chair by the fire.

"Well, sir, for one thing, it seems that he came down the night before and slept at the little inn opposite the lodge, where he did a deal of writing; and yesterday we found that, between the time when we went to bed and the time when we found him on the floor, he had been down to the coal cellar, removed some of the flags, and dug a hole. It looks like a grave, sir."

The lawyer regarded the old woman very intently for a moment, and then arose.

"Let me see that hole, Mrs. Card," said he.

Preceded by the housekeeper, he descended to the basement, and inspected the singularly suggestive excavation which Guy Deverel had made immediately before his awfully sudden death.

"Do you know anything of this, Card?" he inquired, turning upon the old man, who entered the cellar a moment afterwards, and regarding him with a keen scrutiny.

The strange circumstances attending Deverel's death and this discovery in the cellar, had suggested the idea that the old couple might have murdered the deceased, and afterwards on finding that he had slept the night before at Mrs. Sauer's, concluded that it would be safer to invent a story of natural death than to conceal the corpse.

"It was me discovered it when I came in yesterday morning for some coals," returned the old man.

"What made you think that Sir Guy had dug it?" Mr. Crafter asked.

"Who else could have done it?" rejoined Card. "There was no one else in the house besides me and my wife, and Susan."

Mr. Crafter said no more, whatever he thought, but returned, with an air of grave thought, to the dining-room.

"You will wish to see the corpse, sir, I suppose?" said the housekeeper, following him to the door of that apartment.

"What luggage did Sir Guy bring with him?" inquired Mr. Crafter, standing before the fire, and unheeding her question.

"Only a bag, which he brought up himself, and a trunk, which was sent up from the inn an hour or two afterwards."

"Bring the bag here," said he.

In a few minutes, it was brought, with two keys, which had been taken from the pockets of the deceased.

"What did the doctor say was the cause of death?" Mr. Crafter asked, as he selected the smaller of the two keys and unlocked the bag.

"Heart disease, sir, and a shock of some kind," Mrs. Card replied.

"A shock?" repeated the lawyer, turning towards her quickly. "What caused the shock?"

The old woman did not immediately reply.

"Well, we think he may have had a fright," she at length replied. "I had better tell you the truth, sir. I didn't tell Dr. Golding, but I suppose there'll be an inquest, and it will all be got then, and I may as well tell it at once."

The lawyer's suspicions seemed to be confirmed by this preface, and he listened attentively for her to proceed.

"Susan walks in her sleep, and her wanderings about the house at night have given rise to re-

ports that the house is haunted," continued Mrs. Card, twiddling the corner of her apron as she spoke. "The flyman who drove Sir Guy from the station says that they saw the ghost as they were coming up the avenue, and that Sir Guy ordered him to drive back to the inn. That shows that he was frightened a bit, doesn't it, sir?"

The lawyer nodded assent, and she went on.

"Well, sir, we think that he met Susan in the corridor, and thought she was the ghost."

"That will do, Mrs. Card," said he. "There will, as you say, be an inquest, and all the circumstances bearing upon this mysterious affair will be investigated."

The housekeeper then withdrew, and Mr. Crafter proceeded to examine the papers in the deceased's bag.

There were several letters, which he just glanced at, and returned to their envelopes.

But one paper consisting of several sheets, folded lengthwise in a large envelope, on which his own name was written, was eagerly and attentively perused.

He had read more than half of the manuscript when an expression of horror and surprise took the place of the look of grave interest with which he had read so far, and he arose from the chair, dropping the paper upon the carpet.

For some minutes he stood motionless, agitated and perplexed by what he had just read.

Then he took from the table the larger of the two keys which had been found in the pockets of the deceased, and rang the bell.

"Send your husband to me," he said to Mrs. Card, who responded to the summons.

Card was not long in making his appearance.

"Card," said Mr. Crafter, "show me the corridor in which you found Sir Guy."

The man led the way up the stairs, and pointed out to him the spot on which the deceased was lying when discovered.

"Have the rooms on this side of the house been entered of late years?" the lawyer asked.

"Not since Sir Guy went away, sir," the old man replied. "His orders were strict that nothing on this side was to be disturbed, and then two rooms have been shut up ever since. There was a bad smell in this corridor after Sir Guy went away, but we couldn't find the key, and we thought Sir Guy must have taken it away with him."

"Is that the key?" Mr. Crafter asked.

"It is likely, sir," replied Card. "We haven't tried it."

The lawyer immediately inserted the key in the lock, turned it, and entered the room.

Just glancing around as he crossed it, he opened the inner door and looked in.

Shuddering with horror, he drew back, closed the door, and hurried into the corridor, locking the outer door and taking away the key.

"I want you to take a note into the town, Card," said he.

They proceeded to the library, where Mr. Crafter wrote a brief note, which he addressed to the chief constable.

Card, regarding the address with surprise and bewilderment, departed on his errand, and the lawyer returned to the dining-room, where he resumed his perusal of the manuscript.

When he had concluded he placed it in the bag, which he locked, and fell into a profound reverie.

While he sits there awaiting the arrival of a constabulary officer, the reader may be made acquainted with the facts which he had gleaned from the manuscript, and some which were known to him before.

Sir Rupert Deverel, Guy's elder brother, had been privately married just before his father's death, to a girl whose personal attractions and agreeable manners were her only dower, and whose relations occupied a very lowly position.

He had intended to bring his wife to the hall, and introduce her to his family, when his father's death removed the motive for secrecy; but when that occurred he deferred that step on various pretexts, and the marriage still remained a secret when his own decease opened to his brother the dazzling prospect of succeeding to a baronetcy and the patrimony that was rightfully his infant nephew's.

Being his brother's executor, it was easy for him to get possession of all letters and papers that would have established his nephew's legitimacy, Lady Deverel being very simple and confiding, and knowing nothing of law.

The child, being so young, was a lesser obstacle to the success of his iniquitous scheme, however, than Lady Deverel, whom he had a constant difficulty in dissuading from a public declaration of her position and rights.

He knew that the announcement could not be

delayed indefinitely, and the temptation becoming greater by contemplation, he conceived the dishonorable design of making her his accomplice.

He invited her to meet him in the park, took her into the house, and then, with well simulated declarations of passion, strove to make her yield to his designs.

The outraged lady resisted, and would have raised an alarm if he had not stifled her cries by pressing her handkerchief upon her mouth.

He now felt that he had gone too far to retreat with safety, and prompted by this consideration and the reflection that it was now in his power to remove the chief obstacle to the realization of his ambitious project, he continued the pressure until his victim sank upon the floor a corpse.

Neither Lady Deverel nor himself had been seen by any of the servants, and it would be easy, he thought, to remove the corpse by night, and bury it in some secluded spot in the grounds.

Locking the door, and leaving the house unobserved, he went to the place where his nephew was living with a nurse, and there made with the clown, Tom Nobbs, the arrangement with which the reader is acquainted, and which was carried out on the following day.

But horror and remorse at his crime had already seized him, and he shrank from the task of burying the corpse, which still lay where his victim had fallen.

The longer he deferred the execution of his dreadful task, the greater became the horror with which it inspired him.

He resolved, therefore, to leave it where it was, and henceforth lived upon the continent, where he plunged for a time into profligacy and dissipation, vainly endeavoring to forget the past, and stifle conscience.

How deeply remorse at last stung him, what vain endeavors he made to partially atone for his crime by restoring to his nephew the position which he had usurped, the reader knows.

Mr. Crafter was aroused from the reverie into which he had fallen by the arrival of a police inspector, whom he conducted to the blue chamber, after preparing him for the sight he had there to witness by a brief recapitulation of the facts disclosed by Guy Deverel's confession.

It was the mouldering remains of Lady Deverel, which, stretched upon the floor, looked, in the mourning garb of the victim, so much like a black cross, when the place was furtively visited by Dr. Langton.

The startling story of Guy Deverel's crime was told on the inquest, and the remains of the murderer and the victim were then consigned to the cemetery of the neighboring town.

CHAPTER XII.

A CIRCUS REVEL—DEVILSHOOF TELLS A STORY—A LETTER FROM TOM NOBBS—AN UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE.

SALAMANSKY'S circus was at Ostend.

The last performance in that town had been given, and as the company were about to disperse, they had resolved not to separate without a supper and a ball.

The interior of the circus had been partially dismantled, tables placed where the stalls had been, and the remaining floor space boarded for dancing.

The party had supped; Herr Wenzel had sung the praises of the good Rhine wine, and Lettie Lennard had evoked rapturous applause with an English ballad, when the manager, who presided, announced that their young friend, Devilshoof, had a story to tell.

"In the ancient city of Königsberg," began the acrobat, standing up, and assuming as grave an expression as it was possible for such an impish countenance to wear, "there is an ancient inn called the 'Silver Cross,' which many years ago had a shocking bad character as the supposed slaughter-house of numerous unfortunate travelers, and has ever since had the bad repute of being haunted by their ghosts."

"That was where you lodged, was it not?" Percy Bellingham asked of Wenzel, in a whisper.

"Yes," replied the equestrian, in the same subdued manner. "He lodged there, too, and perhaps heard his story there."

"One night, less than a hundred years ago," continued Devilshoof, "a boy slept there, who, before he turned in, had the curiosity—being of an inquiring turn of mind—to examine the furniture, and poke his nose into every cupboard and corner of his room."

"There was a big picter of some jolly old buffer who, if he was like his picter, must have lived in what they called the Dark Ages. He was so dark, indeed, that our young explorer had to stand upon a chair to see his face, and, happening to lean against the picter, he was very near doing a forward into the next room."

"How was that?" asked Willie Anderson.

"I will tell you, but don't interrupt the recitation, if you please," said Devilshoof.

"The old buffer wheeled around—leastways, his picter did—and the young gentleman who was so near performing a somersault, without intending it, saw that it was let into the partition, and formed a part of it, a contrivance which may have been turned, in them dark ages, to very wicked purposes.

"Still impelled by the spirit of inquiry, the boy dropped into the next room, and looked about him.

"He found that the picter was double, the panel having another portrait on the other side; but that was not the only discovery he made.

"The room was hung with old tapestry, and behind this he discovered a sliding panel."

"Is this a true story you are telling us?" inquired Willie Anderson.

"Every word," replied Devilshoof. "If you go to Konigsberg again, put up at the 'Silver Cross,' and ask to see the haunted room. You will find the revolving portrait and the sliding panel, if no alteration has been made since the time of which I am speaking.

"Pardon this interruption, ladies and gentlemen. The boy I am telling you of, finding that a Russian Jew slept in the room next his own, and an English doctor in the other, thought he would give them a fright.

"So he dressed himself up, and in the dead of night turned the portrait on its pivot, and stepped into the room where the Jew was sleeping.

"Didn't he give the Israelite a fright? He went dead off with fear, and the boy lifted up the tapestry, pushed back the sliding panel, and walked into the next room.

"The Englishman was awake as well as the Jew. He was generally wide awake, indeed. He raised himself on his elbow, and asked the apparition who it was. His ghostship not answering, he snatches up a revolver, and fires point-blank at the apparition, which vanished directly in a cloud of smoke."

"The smoke from the pistol, I suppose," observed Percy Bellingham.

"The report alarmed the house," continued the acrobat, "and the doctor opened the door and admitted the landlord."

"Together they searched the room, but the boy was by that time in his own room, and the mystery remains unravelled to this day."

"Our friend Percy," said Wenzel, "asked just now if the story was true. I think I can vouch for its truth, for I lodged at the 'Silver Cross' while we were at Konigsberg, and I remember the alarm occasioned by the report of a pistol in the dead of night. Devilshoof lodged there, too; and I suspect he was the hero of this story."

"Spare my modesty," said Devilshoof, sitting down.

At this moment a groom entered with a letter, which he gave to Willie Anderson.

"A letter from England!" exclaimed Willie, opening it. "Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen, I recognize the handwriting of my old friend, Tom Nobbs, the clown."

The letter was as follows:

"ROYAL STREET, LAMBETH.

"DEAR BOY:—Glad to hear that you are getting on fine, and that the ghost walks with becoming regularity. You will see by the address at the top of this that we have shifted our pitch, which is owing to my being engaged for a short season with Tossett's company, performing in a temporary building in the back regions of Lambeth Walk.

The old woman and self are bono and hope you are the same, also Lettie, and young Bellingham, and Master Cupid. Give our respects to them all. I think that is all at present from

Yours very truly,

"TOM NOBBS.

"P.S.—Mrs. N. has opened this that I may put in a newspaper cutting, which seems to me to be worth your most attentive perusal and consideration. Was not Crafter and Carson the lawyers who advertised for you? Reckon it all up, and tell me what you make of it."

The newspaper cutting enclosed was a report of the inquests held by the coroner for Kent upon the bodies of Guy Deverel and his sister-in-law.

The evidence being given at considerable length, on account of the social position of the deceased and the mysterious circumstances attending the disappearance of Lady Deverel and the death of Guy, Willie replaced the papers in his pocket when the groom entered again, and informed him that a gentleman was waiting to see him.

"Where is he, Bitzer?" he inquired, thinking, so full was his mind just then of the postscript of Tom Nobb's letter, that the unexpected visitor must be a clerk from the office of Messrs. Crafter and Carson, or perhaps one of that respectable firm.

"In the dressing-room," replied Bitzer.

To that apartment Willie hurried, and to his amazement beheld Dr. Langton.

"Is it you?" he exclaimed, with an expression of mingled surprise and disappointment upon his countenance.

"My dear boy, it is I, your old friend," replied the doctor, extending his fat white hand, which, however, Willie disregarded. "I have great news for you. Permit me to congratulate you upon your accession to a title and a fortune. You are now one of the landed gentry of England."

"I am sorry if you have taken any trouble to bring me this news," said Willie. "I have just received a letter from England."

"You know it?" returned the doctor, reflecting the young acrobat's look of surprise and disappointment. "But your correspondent cannot know that Dev—I mean, how can you have heard of your uncle's death?"

"I decline to communicate to you the information that has just reached me," replied Willie; "indeed, I have not yet had time to read it."

"Then you are really only jumping at a conclusion, my young friend," said Dr. Langton, becoming radiant again. "Come with me to my hotel, and I will explain to you the whole case, which is very complicated. Then Crafter and Carson will negotiate with the Home Office, and get you a pardon, and we will go to London, where my evidence and that of your foster-father, the worthy Nobbs, will make everything straight."

"I will go to Crafter and Carson and take the risk," said Willie. "I have not yet read the papers which have been sent to me, but whatever may be their drift I will dispense with your services."

"You refuse?" exclaimed the doctor.

"I do," returned Willie, turning away from him. "You are not a safe man, Dr. Langton."

"Then I shall go to London by the next steamer, and make the best of the matter for myself," said the doctor, with unwonted savageness in his tone.

Willie returned to the arena, where his companions were selecting their partners for a dance.

"Am I in time to have the pleasure of the first dance with you?" he said to Fedora.

The Russian girl placed her hand in his with a smile of gratification, and then the band struck up an enlivening tune, and they began spinning through the mazes of a waltz.

The moment it was concluded he approached Percy Bellingham, who had been the partner of Lettie Lennard.

"That was Dr. Langton," said he. "He came to tell me my uncle is dead."

"Ah!" ejaculated Percy; "that is great news. What will you do? And what does the old man say?"

"I shall start for London to-morrow and see Crafter and Carson," replied Willie. "Nobbs sends me a long story which I have not read yet, but which I gather from his letter has something to do with the doctor's news. Let me see you before you turn in."

There was an exchange of partners, the band played a galop, and the night wore merrily on.

More dancing, more songs, more wine, until long after midnight.

Willie Anderson escorted Fedora to her lodging, and then hurried to his own, where he lit a lamp, and sat down to read the newspaper report of the inquests on Guy Deverel and his sister-in-law.

He had just finished the perusal of Mr. Crafter's evidence in the latter case when Percy Bellingham entered.

"What do you think of that, cully?" said Willie, giving him the paper.

"Who were these Deverels?" Percy inquired.

"Read, cully, read!" replied Willie, resting his head on his hands, and reflecting upon what he had just learned.

Not a word more was spoken until Percy had concluded the perusal of the report, of which only the following portion need be given here.

"MR. CRAFTER said: Much of the confession was already known to me. Mr. Deverel made a statement to me two or three years ago concerning Sir Rupert's marriage and the measures which he had taken for putting his nephew aside and securing the title and estate for himself; but at that time he merely stated that Lady Deverel was dead. He was very anxious to discover the boy whom he acknowledged to be the true heir, and to restore to him his legitimate rights, and he instructed us to advertise, to offer a reward for information, and to employ private detectives. One of our agents discovered a boy whom we believed to be Rupert Deverel, performing as an acrobat in a traveling circus; but the lad seemed suspicious, evaded the detective, and left the country."

"Sir Rupert Deverel, I congratulate you," said Percy Bellingham, rising. "When my circus comes your way, I shall give you a call, and ask for your patronage."

"Turn it up, Bellingham," returned Willie Anderson, gravely. "We shall be neighbors, you know."

"That will be an inducement, certainly," observed Percy, reflectively. "But then there is Lettie, and until we are married only the circus business can keep us together."

"Think of it," said Willie, rising. "And now good night, or rather good morning."

They shook hands and proceeded at once to their respective chambers.

Day was breaking, however, before Willie fell asleep, and then he dreamed, until the sun was shining on the housetops, a marvelously incongruous dream, in which Dr. Langton and Percy's sister were strangely mingled.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DOCTOR'S LAST CARD—THE ACROBAT AND THE LAWYER—LANGTON IN CUSTODY—CONCLUSION.

DR. LANGTON, frowning and smiling alternately, as he walked quickly from the circus to his hotel, prepared for traveling as soon as he reached it, and raced in a cab to the railway station, getting there in time for a train that would enable him to reach Calais soon after midnight.

"I shall reach Dover five hours and a half before the steamer leaves Ostend," said he, as he leaned back in a comfortable first-class carriage, and reflected upon the situation. "It will be odd if I cannot, with such a start, spin a web that will catch my fly between London Bridge and Lincoln's Inn Fields."

The Dover steamer left Calais an hour and a half after midnight, and those of her passengers who went on to

London, arrived in the grey light of an autumn morning, and dispersed to their several destinations.

Dr. Langton breakfasted, and having consulted an old pocket-book filled with memoranda, many of which were in cipher, he proceeded eastward until he reached a street in the slums of Whitechapel.

Entering a dingy little coffee-shop, he asked a drabby waiters whether Slim Jim was there, and being answered in the negative, with a stare of surprise at the respectable appearance of the visitor, gave her a shilling to send a note, which he at once wrote to that singularly-named gentleman.

Slim Jim was not long in making his appearance.

He was a pale, slight young man, with a face expressive of cunning, knavery, and dissipated habits, and wore a shabby suit of black.

"Doctor!" he exclaimed, on recognizing Langton. "This is a surprise, and a pleasure. When did you return?"

"Just arrived," returned the doctor, "and shall probably be off again to-night. You had better be ignorant of my movements."

"I can keep a thing dark, doctor," said Jim; "you know that. What can I do for you?"

They leaned over the table, and spoke in whispers, Slim Jim nodding his head by way of affirmative occasionally, which saved words and expedited the business.

After half an hour's consultation, the doctor gave his fellow conspirator a sovereign, and having made an appointment for the evening, they separated.

It was nearly four o'clock that afternoon, when Willie Anderson and his companions arrived in London, and he was about to call a cab to convey him at once to the office of Messrs. Crafter and Carson, when he was accosted by Slim Jim.

"I think I have the honor of addressing Sir Rupert Deverel?" said the young man, raising his hat, and speaking in a deferential tone.

"I believe so," returned Willie, a smile accompanying the look of surprise with which he heard himself so addressed.

"I come from Crafter and Carson's," said Slim Jim. "Your departure from Ostend was telegraphed to them this morning, and they deputed me to meet you on your arrival, and conduct you to their office."

"Very kind of them," exclaimed Willie, in an emotional tumult of surprise and delight.

"I have a cab waiting," said the wily Jim, leading the way.

"Be careful," whispered Percy Bellingham to his friend. "I don't half like the looks of that young man."

"Come with me," said Willie, and shaking hands with Lettie Lennard and Devilshoof, who were going to walk over to Lambeth and visit the Nobbses, he and Percy followed Slim Jim to the cab.

"Circus profession, sir?" said the pretended clerk, addressing Percy, as the vehicle turned into the Strand.

"I amuse myself that way," rejoined Percy.

"Very pleasant in the summer, I should think?" said Slim Jim.

Then, informing them that he was very fond of circus entertainments, he proceeded to speak of those he had witnessed, and to expatiate upon the merits of the equestrians, acrobats, etc., whose performances he had seen at various places of amusement in the metropolis.

"We are not going the nearest way to Lincoln's Inn fields," Percy interrupted him by remarking, as he saw that the cab was approaching Temple Bar.

"It's all right," said Jim; "I have a call to make just here."

The cab was driven into Chancery Lane, turned to the left, and after two or three more turns, stopped before a dingy, disreputable-looking public-house, in one of the dirtiest streets of that not very respectable region.

"I will not be a moment," said Slim Jim, as he left the cab.

"Let us sling our hooks," said Percy.

"Wait a bit," returned Willie. "We can't be far from Lincoln's Inn Fields now."

Slim Jim reappeared presently, with a steaming glass of brandy and water.

"Will you drink, gentlemen?" said he.

Percy hastened to decline, and a nudge from his elbow evoked a similar response from Willie.

Slim Jim looked disappointed.

"It will do you good this damp afternoon," said he.

Finding that they were not to be prevailed upon to drink, he carried the beverage back to the bar.

"Now let us step it," said Percy, opening the door.

The cabman whistled, Slim Jim ran from the public house, followed by several fellows whose countenances would have been sufficient to convict them at the Old Bailey of any offense known to the statute books, and Percy and Willie were seized as they sprang to the pavement.

"Hold them! They have run away from their friends," cried Slim Jim.

Percy's left hand delivered a stinging blow on the face of the nearest ruffian, and his right, aided by his dexter foot, threw another upon his back, while Willie knocked a third over the second as the latter fell, dived under the horse, and ran off as fast as he could.

Percy dashed through the less forward of the enemy, and followed his friend with the fleetness of a deer.

Dr. Langton was at that moment sitting in the private office of Mr. Crafter, who was leaning back in his arm-chair, listening attentively to a statement which the doctor was making, and which had reference to the Deverel baronetcy and estates.

"I was at that time intimate with both Rupert and Guy," Langton was saying; "though Rupert did not admit me to his confidence in respect of his marriage. I was aware of the connection, and knew that a child had been born; and when, after his death, the mother and child mysteriously disappeared, I suspected foul play. Inquiries resulted in discovery of the marriage, but as that by itself was of no use to me, and I could get no clew to the child, I kept it to myself."

"You were not acting on public and social grounds?" observed Mr. Carter, partly as a question and partly by way of comment.

"Not at all," returned the doctor; "I was seeking my own ends, and not thinking either of society or any other individual. Some time ago—a year or two—I saw a lad whose striking resemblance to Sir Rupert Deverel prompted me to make inquiries concerning him, which resulted in my conviction that he was the true baronet; but I lost sight of him while pursuing my inquiries, and only lately rediscovered him while traveling on the continent."

"And you have come to inform us where he may be found?" said Mr. Crafter, in the same manner as before.

"On receiving an undertaking from you to pay me a thousand pounds on my producing the lad, and satisfying you that he is Sir Rupert Deverel," rejoined Dr. Langton; "you are Guy Deverel's executor, I believe, and I suppose, the boy's guardian."

"We have a clew to a boy whom we have reason to believe is the son of the late Sir Rupert Deverel," said the lawyer, speaking with studied deliberation. "That boy is, or was lately, on the continent. You must see, therefore, that the boy you speak of is very likely to prove to be the boy whom our agents discovered more than a year ago, and that we should be acting hastily and unadvisedly in giving you the undertaking you ask."

Dr. Langton looked thoughtful, and his brow became corrugated.

"You will never discover the boy without my aid," he observed, after a pause.

"Sir Rupert Deverel, sir," said a clerk, opening the door at that moment.

"The deuce!" exclaimed Dr. Langton, rising.

"You see," said Mr. Crafter, with a smile; "this, without doubt, is the youth I just now referred to. Show him in, Mr. Jenkins."

Willie Anderson, as it is convenient still to call him, entered a moment afterwards, followed by Percy Bellingham.

Both were breathless with running, and looked a trifle excited.

"Is that young gentleman the supposed son of the late Sir Rupert Deverel?" the lawyer inquired of Dr. Langton, after a glance at Willie.

"If he claims to be, he must make out his claim as he can," replied the doctor. "He will have no assistance from me."

"You promised me your assistance yesterday, Dr. Langton," said Willie. "But I can prove my right without you."

"Dr. Langton," exclaimed Mr. Crafter, glancing in surprise from Willie to the baffled doctor, and back to Willie.

"Dr. Langton, *alias* Gilbert, and several other *aliases*," said Willie, resentfully. "Langton, the note forger, who is wanted by the police in this country and one or two other countries."

If looks could kill, the glance which Langton bestowed upon his denouncer would have annihilated him on the spot.

But happily they have not that power, and the doctor was not, as we have before noted, prone to violence when abstinence from it was consistent with his safety.

Without a word he reached the door in three strides and entered the outer office, where, to his confusion and dismay, he encountered a couple of policemen.

Endeavoring to look as composed as was possible, he strove to pass them, but he was seized immediately, and told that he was a prisoner.

In another moment his wrists were encircled with steel cuffs devised for the secure custody of wrong-doers, and led to Bow street.

"They have got him," said Willie to his companion, and then turning to Mr. Crafter, he added the explanatory remark, that they had given information to the police on their way, thinking it probable that they should encounter the doctor at or near Mr. Crafter's office.

"You claim to be Sir Rupert Deverel?" said the lawyer; "what evidence have you to produce in support of your claim?"

"I have only just arrived in England," replied Willie. "Your advertisement for William Anderson, what I heard more than a year ago from Dr. Langton, and a letter which reached me yesterday, informing me of the recent strange events, made me think I had better come here at once, or I should have brought with me the man who brought me up, who can tell you all about me."

"Who is your friend?" inquired Mr. Crafter, who had listened, attentively, to every word his visitor had spoken.

"Mr. Percy Bellingham, son of Mr. Bellingham of the Old Quarry House," replied Willie.

"In the same profession, I believe?" said the lawyer, with a smile. "You call it a profession, I think?"

"Yes, sir," replied Percy, returning his smile.

"You have been known by the name of Anderson?" said Mr. Crafter, turning to Willie again.

"Yes, sir."

"Ever since I have known him," added Percy.

"I must trouble you to come to me to-morrow," said the lawyer, after a moment's thought, "and bring with you the man you spoke of, and any documents or other matters which may help you to establish your claim."

Our young friends then withdrew.

The evidence which was placed before Mr. Crafter was

found to be incontestable, and Willie's claim to be Sir Rupert Deverel, Bart., of Stoneborough Hall, in the county of Kent, was acknowledged.

Mr. Crafter, in the capacity of his guardian, received him into his house, engaged a tutor for him, and in every way prepared him to take his proper place in society on attaining his majority.

That period arrived not very long ago, and on the same day Sir Rupert Deverel took possession of his ancestral mansion, and married Miss Bellingham, to whom he had become devotedly attached during his minority.

Lady Deverel and Lettie Lennard are warmly attached

friends, and the union of the latter with Percy Bellingham may be regarded as a not very remote event.

Dr. Langton is doing penance for his sins at a government establishment, where he has got some years to remain.

Our young friend, Devilshoof, was, through the liberality of his late companions in the ring, enabled to start a circus of his own.

Tom Nebbs and one or two other old friends are with him, and are all doing well.

The old house has outlived its evil reputation, and so ends our story.

[THE END.]

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